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Near East & South Asia

Iran:
Battle of Faw

FBIS-NES-94-076-S
Wednesday
20 April 1994

Near East & South Asia

SUPPLEMENT

IRAN:

Battle of Faw

FBIS-NES-94-076-S CONTENTS *20 April 1994*

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94LA0102A Tehran Battle of Faw in Persian 1982 pp 1-208

* Text of *Battle of Faw* 1
[Introduction] 1
Unceasing Effort From the Onset of the Task 2
    Perseverance and Serious Effort of the Combatants of Islam 3
    A) Training 3
    B) Reconnaissance 4
    C) Preparing the Area (Engineering Measures and Transportation) 6
Overall Presence of the People's Forces 7
    People's Support 8
Clear Signs of Victory at the Start of the Operations 9
    Final Preparations and Efforts of the Forces 11
    Fateful Operation of Crossing the Arvand River 12
Start of Fighting and the Fall of the Enemy Line 15
    Announcement of the Operation Code 16
Hit-and-Run Operations (by Water, Land Forces) 18
    Movement of Support Units on Our Bank 19
    Commanders and the Operation 19
Significant Advancement of the Combatants of Islam 21
    The Right Flank 21
    0300, After Midnight (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986]) 22
    0700, Morning (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986]) 23
    The Central Axis 24
    The Left Flank 26
    Summary of the Operations of the First Day 28
The Second Night 28
    Start of the Engineering War: Loaders and Mines 28
The Second Day 29
    Start of More Basic Annihilation of the Enemy 29
    Advancement on Other Axes 31
    Enemy Movements on the Basra Road Axis 31
    Second Counterattack on the al-Behar Road Axis 32
    Occupation of the First Missile Base 32
The Third Night 33
    Continuation of Attacks on the Basra and Om ol-Qasr Road Axes 33
    Attack on the Basra Road Axis 33
    Advancement on the Om ol-Qasr Road Axis 34
The Third Day 35
    Counterattack on the Coastal Axis (Date Palm Grove) 35
    Fighting the Republican Guards 36
    Chemical Bombing 37
The Fourth Night 37
    Continuation of Our Attack and Vast Destruction of the Enemy 37
    Description of Operations on the Axis to the Left of the Road 38
    Description of Operations on the Axis to the Right of the Road 40
The Fourth Day 42
    Continuation of Enemy Pressure and Resistance of Our Forces 42
    On the Axis of the al-Behar Road 42
    On the Axis of the Basra Road 42
The Fifth Night and Day 45
    Retaking of the Three-Way Intersection and Reinforcing a Strong Defense 45

- Diversionary Tactics on the Om ol-Qasr Road Axis 46
- Night Enemy Counterattack on the Axis of the Date Palm Grove 47
- Fifth Day of the Operation 47

Complete Stabilization of All Defense Lines From the Banks of the Arvand River to the Khur 'Abdollah River .. 47

- The Sixth Night and Day of the Operation 47
- The Seventh Night 48
- Diversionary Tactics on the Axis of Om ol-Qasr Road 48
- The Seventh Day 49
- Reorganization of the Enemy and Its Annihilation 49
- The Eighth Night and Day 50
- Determination and Declaration of Readiness of the Forces To Continue the Operation 50
- Our Final Measures and the Enemy Movements 51

Explanation of Selected Terms Used in the Book 52

* Text of *Battle of Faw*

94LA0102A Tehran Battle of Faw in Persian 1982 pp 1-208

[Book published by Revolution Guard: *Battle of Faw*—all subheads, punctuation as published; cited footnote page numbers refer to original pagination]

[Text]

[Introduction]

In the name of God, the compassionate and the merciful

"Rise light-loaded and heavy-loaded and fight on the path of God with your property and your life." Repentance - 41

The "Faw battle" can be looked at from various angles and examined from various perspectives. Discussion and research in any of these areas will have very valuable results, but in this book, the "perspective" is to inquire into the nature, composition, texture, and actions of the implementing forces.

It is true that in a great action such as the Faw battle, planning, devising policies, political backgrounds, resources, tools of war, vast social support, etc. are considered important factors. But, specifically, the roles of the motivation, belief, and determination of the operational forces (including the operational commanders, cadres, and commando Basij forces) have been the main definers of the fate of this battle.

This book shows that in many stages, the progress of the task and the implementation of plans and programs were possible only because of the competence of the implementing elements. In all stages of readiness, preparation of operations, release of forces, breaking through lines, expansion of captured coastal areas, and advancement and stabilization of regions taken, the implementing elements reveal their determining role. The combatants' religious beliefs, revolutionary goals, heartfelt interest in the leadership of the revolution, sincerity, self-sacrifice, love of God and martyrdom, strong determination, and enthusiasm to take part in holy war on the path of God are the main capital in the horrible encounter with the enemy, who is armed to the teeth, and by relying on this capital, the longest of battles (about 90 days) was possible to continue, under very difficult conditions, until ultimate victory.

In this book, we see the commanders, who in various phases of the operations, in addition to carrying out their specific duties in step with the commando forces, face exhausting difficulties, each of which is enough to bring despair to the forces and halt the task. For example, in building embankments to block the enemy view, which must be done at night without a sound and within a short period of time in an unfavorable region, we see the commanders and operational cadre who give up the few hours they have to rest and actively participate to make possible the impossible.

We see how the revolutionary Hezbollah youth from cities and villages voluntarily join the lines of the line breakers and scuba divers, making the army of Islam powerful, with the number of volunteers to accept critical and dangerous responsibilities far exceeding the needed level. We see that, instead of causing reactions and disappointment, the complexity of the task results in more initiative, hard work, and thinking on the part of the combatants of Islam to display their valuable talents, removed from the accepted standards and forms and going beyond the dry military instructions. We see that, given the special conditions of the operational region and the restrictions of our own capabilities and those of the enemy and the position of each, the combatants of Islam are obliged to undergo specialized training for these operations within an inadequate period of time, in addition to their regular general training. The Basiji forces that come to the front temporarily and for short periods of time must quickly pass courses in swimming, scuba diving, piloting boats, fighting in forests and date palm groves, urban combat, crossing marshes, special hand-to-hand combat for the region, and so on. These courses would have exhausted the forces had they been of any other nature and composition. They would have been in despair and prevented them from completing this volunteer task.

We see that present in the great battle, in addition to the Guard Corps cadre, are various strata of the people, including precollegiate and college students, university graduates, teachers, clerics, farmers, workers, tradesmen, and more.

Most of the volunteers have been to the front several times before and have taken part in several operations. They are all young and joyful, and their spirits are high. In some of the units, the poverty and deprivation of the scuba diving volunteers is their mark of distinction and common characteristic, which strongly draws one's attention. The children and brothers of martyrs and the disabled people, for whom scuba diving operations would seem impossible to a casual observer, are also present in these regiments.

We see that the relationship between the Basijis and the commanders is that of two close brothers, two friends, and two fellow combatants. While the Basiji sees the commander in a position of a beloved one, an elder brother, a leader, the commander sees the Basiji as a lover, self-sacrificer, the main element in advancing the war, and the cream of the crop of the society. The commander speaks of the issue of martyrdom, resistance, and fighting to the last drop of blood, and if there are those who are unable to tolerate the future pressures and hardships, they should leave right then. He asks the Basijis to make their decision to take part or not take part on a path from which most likely there will be no return. The Islamic forces interrupt the speech of the commander with their tears, and after the speech they rush to embrace and kiss him, and he is forced to escape the crowd.

It is with such a background and such factors that a great event occurs, against all expectations of the world, destroying all that the enemies have thought about and opening a new way in the process of the war. It is under such conditions that the Valfajr 8 Operation and its completion phases are carried out over a long period of time. Years of effort, expense, and resistance come to fruition and scenes are created, of which certain manifestations must be followed in the text of the book to realize part of the greatness of this operation.

The "War Study and Research" narrators in the operational army have depicted many of the scenes. They are narrators who have been witnesses themselves and have gained an understanding from their direct presence on the scene. They have also carefully examined the observations and reports of others (commanders, cadres, commando forces) and have talked with them to avoid the slightest evidence of exaggeration in transmitting the sacred events manifesting the religious beliefs of the Hezbollah. Obviously, the events have not been recorded as they occurred, because the issue is beyond reporting in mere words and phrases.

Another point must also be emphasized, and that is that speaking of a war that is ongoing is a very difficult task. Much of what is observed carries with it restrictions that preclude discussion of many issues. Hence, many of the vital and astonishing issues will have to be published another time and will have to remain hidden for now in classified notes, tapes, and various reports (with a limited number published).

In this book, in order to better facilitate communication, generally the present tense is used, and this is because the narrator or narrators were participating step-by-step in the unfolding of events, and naturally this mode of expression is more appropriate for the narration. In the early pages of the book, the reader may find this style bothersome, but soon, especially when he becomes involved in the issues in the book, this feeling will fade.

Another point is that the expansiveness of the front of conflict, the vastness of the combat organization, the long duration of the operations, and the need for brevity have not allowed us to follow all the events as far as possible with consideration for the chronology. Necessarily, examples have been selected and reported from various units. In the examples referred to, where the names of the martyred cadre and commanders have been mentioned, it has been to honor the stations of the martyrs, not in the sense of preferring these brothers over others. It must be emphasized that in the advancement of the operations, many brothers have had specific determining roles. Their names have not been given due to ethical considerations.

Also, it should be pointed out that due to the inaccessibility of sources outside the Guard Corps of the Islamic Revolution, no mention is made of the operations of the self-sacrificers of the Construction Jihad and the battalion brothers who played an active role in engineering, air and artillery support, and excellent air coverage. It must be emphasized that this does not negate the great value of their work.

As you see on the map concerning the enemy counterattacks, the desperate attacks and actions of the enemy followed by the countless casualties of Iran were more numerous and greater than what was reported. For this reason, after the operations, the Faw region became known as the "corridor of death" among the Iraqi military, and a large number of Iraqi commanders and soldiers were executed for refusing to enter this region.

(When God saw our truthfulness, he made our enemy abject.)

Sermon 55

Office of the Political Deputy of the Central Command Post of the Guard Corps of the Islamic Revolution

War Study and Research

Unceasing Effort From the Onset of the Task

Decisions were made in the area of the operations on the Arvand River after a great deal of study, utilization of past experiences, and employment of important military initiatives. Undoubtedly, in order to engage in such an attack, maximum care and sensitivity are among the necessities of an expansive, calculated military strike. But what has given the experienced commanders of the Guard Corps the most motivation and encouragement in their determination to engage in such an operation are the faith and bravery of the combatants of Islam; the experiences of past wars, such as Kheybar and Badr; and the use of military initiatives and strategies and preliminary activities.

Despite what the forces of Islam learned in the past water-land operations and the great familiarity they have gained with infantry movements and operations in water, the problem of crossing the tumultuous and wide Arvand River requires a great deal of contemplation and is always one of the most important issues discussed at great length, and each of the operating military officials engage in carrying out their mission, one after another, based on their talents, capabilities, and special character. There are brothers among the military commanders who, before they have reached a strong belief in their overall participation in the operations, in all their actions and within the boundaries of their responsibility, give encouragement to the forces under them with hopefulness and reliance on God. As soon as he arrives at the edge of the Arvand River, one of the commanders of the right-flank regiment of the operational zone, while repeating the names of the infallible ones, states:

"May God help us; how can we cross the Arvand?"

However, when he speaks to the combatants of Islam, he says: **"Because the right flank of the area is our responsibility, we must take possession of our positions in any way possible. Even if we face a thousand problems on our way, we must follow our line. The entire operation depends on us. If we retreat one step, it will cause doubt and threaten the morale of others."** Although more or less the same spirit exists in the operational people, they do not stop their active involvement in the operation merely with explanations and preaching. Rather, with unceasing overall effort, they try to carry out their duties well.

In this connection, the commanders engage in the most exhausting tasks alongside the Basiji and Guard Corps brothers and, by carrying sacks along the marshy banks of the Arvand River, help other elements on our side to build strongholds and bunkers so as to expedite and make more serious the course of the operation and the activities of the forces. These brothers, who due to their long service on the fronts in the south have settled their families in the southern cities and in Khuzestan, are so involved in directing the forces and preparing the area that they may not find the opportunity to visit their families for weeks. To a great extent, revolutionary obligations, a sense of responsibility regarding the blood of the martyrs, and the importance of protecting and aiding the survival of the combative forces, which are the most valuable component in strengthening the revolution and Islam, reduce the importance of engaging in such secondary matters. Such actions and serious efforts by military commanders prevent any anxiety and doubt among the combatants concerning the operation, and signs of uncertainty are completely eliminated among all military ranks. The commander of one of the Guard Corps armies, who is charged with the important responsibility of taking the city of Faw, continuously tries to be earnestly involved and participates in all details, to be more confident and to be the initiator of every task. He is not only sensitive to the comings and goings of boats, but he attends to such small tasks as welding. Also, because of his close presence in various areas, often, despite most exhausting tasks during the day, he accompanies other officials of the army to the line and helps build bunkers, fill sand bags, or move them all night.

Perseverance and Serious Effort of the Combatants of Islam

The combatants of Islam, considering the complexities of the region, not only make maximum use of their efforts with extraordinary endeavors and activities to successfully complete important engineering, reconnaissance, training, and other tasks, but also, through their initiatives, expedite the preliminary tasks of the operation. This hard work along with a great deal of thought and initiative helps the combatants of Islam display their valuable talents beyond the accepted laws and forms and not be satisfied with dry instructions. Despite the opinion (and even reprimand) of (conventional) military experts, who engage in discussions everywhere and state the reasons why they reject the idea of the operators stopping the commanders from such actions, they only think about how a task can be carried out well and the sensitive initiatives employed. Experts marginally involved in planning continually state:

"Is such a thing possible? How and by what means can several thousand combatants cross the Arvand River, which is at least 1 km wide and has an uneven bank, to take and secure the enemy bank?"

They are so steadfast and insistent in their belief that they consider carrying out such operations "mere suicide" and do not project anything but the crossing of the Arvand by a few scuba divers and heavy casualties. Since the details of the military genius of the combatants cannot be explained for security and intelligence reasons, mentioning a few points, even if in passing and superficially, concerning the procedure and level of readiness of the combatants of Islam is important:

A) Training

The training of the combatants of Islam is divided into two sections, general and specialist. All infantry regiments and personnel go through a general training course. But this training is very different from all others because, given the importance of observing the security of the operations, the forces are obliged to go through all the military and training techniques of various battles, and since the major experiences of the combatants have been gained in the water-land battles and the "Hur" stagnant waters, the specialized training also takes place in a particular place with conditions similar to those of the main area of operations.

Swimming; piloting a boat; fighting in forests, date palm groves, and urban areas; walking in marshes and passing through obstacles in water; hand-to-hand combat; etc., make the training of the units extensive and at the same time intensive and makes the forces accustomed to the harsh conditions of the time of the operations.

At first, because of the intensity, the forces are exhausted after a day or two. The most important and perhaps most essential kind of training, which puts more pressure on the forces than anything else, is training in scuba diving. In some units, about five or six months prior to the operations, this kind of training had begun, and in the remaining two or three months of the operation, the scuba diving exercises reach such a height that during the day, the forces spend most of their time in the water and engage in maneuvers under the varied conditions of the river current. Nevertheless, the scuba diving forces admit to being tired; yet, in their effort to become stronger, they make no distinction between night and day.

On the other hand, during the training only a number of people serve alongside the training area to attend to the scuba diving brothers in terms of food and bathing. In spite of all this, due to the continuous exercises in water and exhaustion due to the training, some suffer colds. Of course, because of proper food and a great deal of effort to make up for this weakness, few critical and dangerous symptoms are seen, and as a result of the enthusiasm to continue their work to secure the victory of the operations, not only does no disruption or delay occur in training, but also the readiness of the brothers has increased more than expected.

B) Reconnaissance

After passing harsh and exhausting scuba diving courses, the reconnaissance personnel begin a more sensitive and more difficult phase and under very dangerous conditions begin the reconnaissance operations. Crossing the Arvand River, which is 600 meters to 1.5-km wide, and approaching the enemy line, which is heavily guarded to protect the valuable equipment and resources, can be very dangerous. With the help of razit [as published] (a kind of surface radar), infrared binoculars, strong flood lights, various viewing spots, bunkers with several openings in the closest areas of the banks, and strong docks, the enemy has full view of the Arvand River. Hence, this phase of preliminary operations is anticipated to be difficult and dangerous. Considering that reconnaissance operations are carried out with a small number of personnel in the dark of the night, the likelihood of any accident is inevitable. The slightest, most minute shortcoming in these actions will not only result in the captivity of the reconnaissance personnel or possibly in the martyrdom of a number of the best scuba divers, but also the enemy, by seeing such scenes, will become sensitive to the new events and become aware of the future movements of the forces of Islam in the region. It can be said that in this way, the operations will be exposed to a great extent and the important element of "surprise," which is the important secret of victory, will have been compromised. In fact, the lives of many in the forces of Islam depend on the rapid, discreet, and brave actions of the scuba diving reconnaissance forces. Despite all this, the reconnaissance personnel begin their activities (at most) two to six months prior to the attack. Because of the special conditions of the bank in some areas, the brothers must spend only two to three hours to enter the Arvand from a certain, precise point, or locate themselves in a suitable place for surveillance. The unsuitability of the ground conditions on the bank on our side, the relatively great width of the Arvand, and the excitement of anticipating the results of these crucial and destiny-making operations exhausts the forces much more than the maneuver itself or the trial operations, and the saltiness and stench of the water also interferes with normal breathing.

During the past few days, one of the units alone has been able to cross the Arvand 150 times in a short period of time and identify the enemy lines. More than half the operations have been quite successful. Of course, the unsuccessful reconnaissance operations also have had gains, and hence perhaps we should not call them unsuccessful.

A brother says concerning one of these unsuccessful operations:

"...In the first reconnaissance operations from around the city of Faw, during the movement of the forces the enemy shoots a flare towards the opposite bank in the middle of the water, and hence the brothers all go under water. Under conditions around and inside the water there were scattered shots, the brothers immediately go to a broken wooden dock and hide under its supports. After the noise stops, the forces succeed in hiding themselves from enemy sight and return safely to our bank.... During the third month, too, once our reconnaissance forces come face-to-face with enemy scuba divers. No problem occurs and the men successfully return. But the next night the enemy continuously shoots flares in the area."

Despite these problems and the increasing intensity of the reconnaissance activities, the forces remember their training, especially their spirit saturated with faith and indescribable self-sacrifice, and joyfully continue their activities.

Another of the operating units, with some delay in regards to the responsibility in the area assigned to it, carries out 34 reconnaissance operations during 12 nights and days crossing the Arvand, each time taking two to five hours.

On the whole, during three to five months, all operational units have crossed the Arvand 700 to 800 times and succeeded in carrying out reconnaissance operations on various enemy lines. More astonishing is that in none of these operations did anything occur to expose the target of reconnaissance, and considering the tumultuous current of the Arvand and the severity of river waves, no casualties have occurred.

The scuba diving brothers, in the area of the reconnaissance procedures, have interesting reminiscences in which some of the problems and unceasing and self-sacrificing efforts are pointed out. One of these brothers says:

"At 0230 we entered the water. After some movement, we realized that the water was pulling us to the left, but we were resisting it, pulling ourselves to the right, and advanced with difficulty until we came within 60 meters of the enemy. Here, resistance was useless and the water continued to pull us to the left and we were distanced from the reconnaissance target and could do nothing but return. On the way back, we realized that the bank on our side looked very familiar. At 0430, we tried to reach one of our tributaries going against the current and made a great deal of effort until we reached one of the tributaries. We went a little farther back and after performing our prayers, because daylight had come and the personnel of other units were scattered around the area and we were also instructed to maintain security with regard to our own forces as well, we put on local (Arab) clothing, circled the area and returned to our original location. Later, when we surveyed the area, we realized that we had been diverted nine tributaries to the left."

Another brother says:

"When we were 100 meters from our own bank, the water was so turbulent that we went under water. But resisting it, we reached the place we had agreed on earlier. Then we continued on and finally reached a dock on the enemy bank, which was a small platform with a stronghold just beyond it. When we reached the first enemy obstacles, we saw a row of crisscross metal posts and spiral barbed wire of the enemy. We passed through and reached the second enemy obstacle, which was 6 meters higher. In order to pass through this section, we wanted to pull the barbed wire up and down. We tried several times, but it was no use. So we decided to retreat."

Another brother, referring to sensitive reconnaissance movements and the closeness of the reconnaissance team to the enemy bunkers, writes in his report:

"About 20 meters to the left of the enemy watchtower, we reached the enemy bank. Because of the diversion, we moved farther down from the enemy bunkers and went to our own reconnaissance post. There was a great deal of noise inside the enemy bunkers, but we swam and easily passed beyond their bunkers. After passing about six guard bunkers, we reached our own post. We reached the first enemy obstacle, which was two rows of crisscross metal posts with spiral barbed wire installed behind them, which we went through. Here, we were 5 meters from an enemy bunker. We eavesdropped and realized that it was empty. There were no other obstacles ahead, but because it was marsh land, our footprints would be left behind, and the sky was clear, so we decided to return."

In a report by another brother, we read:

"We continued moving in the water. In the middle of the Arvand, there was a severe storm that sent water into the mouths of the men. We reached the Arvand bank with difficulty. From then on, it was marsh land and the ground was soft, so that the brothers' hands and feet would sink into the ground and make noise. Nevertheless, we passed the enemy positions and reached a bunker from which a light was shining."

Another brother says:

"At 2230, we entered the Arvand. Our target was between docks 3 and 4. At the edge of the bank, the water was moving to the left, but it was calm in the middle. At 2400, we reached the dock. At the end of the dock, a guard was standing whistling. Because the guard was above us, we decided to go back somewhat and then move to the right. Finally, the swift current of the river broke all our resistance and we were forced to retreat."

Every one of the reconnaissance teams have gone through difficult and critical moments. Reading the reports of these brothers reminds us of those hard, memorable moments:

"At 0715, we entered the water and after half an hour reached the defense line of the enemy forces. At first, when we entered the river, the water current pulled us to the left somewhat. But when we reached the middle of the Arvand, the current pulled us to the right. Finally, with some diversion, we reached the enemy bank, moved down from the enemy bunkers, and reached the main reconnaissance area. On our way, we noted that the guards were being changed and because their bunkers were crowded we could easily pass by them and reach our area. Someone waited on guard and I went inside. I passed through the crisscross posts, then through a series of old barbed wires with crisscross posts, half of which were sunk in mud. Even though it was very difficult, I got through them. I was about 6 meters from an enemy bunker. I listened for a while. Because the ground was damp and my footprints showed, I decided to go back. At this moment, even though the sky was clear and full of stars, the enemy shot two red and yellow flares...

"Two nights before the operations, we were assigned to make our final surveillance of the enemy lines. This assignment was very sensitive, because only two nights remained until the attack and the slightest mistake would warn the enemy. Two other brothers and I swam toward the enemy bank. When we reached the vegetation at the bank, I gave my flippers to the brothers and went to examine the arrea for a few minutes. After doing so, when I returned, I could not find the brothers. In the dark of the night, I began to search among the vegetation [chulan], but there was no sign of them. More important, they had my flippers, and I had no way of returning and entering the Arvand. At this time, I heard a sound. I went into the water and grabbed the vegetation at the bank. As the sound came closer, I realized it was an enemy patrol, which was moving in a boat near the vegetation at the bank. At this moment, I thought that the guys were somewhere farther down, and the best way to find them was this boat. I immediately held on to the boat. Two people were rowing, and I was moving along with them, looking all around to find the bank where we had landed. Finally, when I saw the bank I wanted, I let go of the boat and found the brothers among the vegetation at the banks and we returned to our bank together."

Finally, the brave scuba diving combatants, with utmost self-sacrifice and severe hardship and danger, succeeded in conquering the wild Arvand River and, overcoming numerous obstacles, in closely identifying the positions of the enemy. These reconnaissance operations were of such high quality that the brothers, even in the final days prior to the operation, sit discussing the size of the opening of the enemy bunkers and the many signs on the opposite bank, and inform each other of the most minute points. The enemy defense lines have become so familiar for our forces that even in the darkest moments of night, the scuba diving guides are able to lead the penetrating forces to the area without attracting the attention of the enemy. Moreover, reconnaissance forces, as a result of their extensive practice, their perseverance in gaining scuba diving experience, and their wrestling with the Arvand River, have been able during this period to uncover issues important to research, given their familiarity with and access to the scientific secrets of the currents in the Arvand River that would require years to learn under normal conditions and during peace time. The forces of Islam, with utmost power and in the least amount of time, have studied the ebb and flow of the Arvand River and the reasons for them as well as their effects. At the present time, these experiences and discoveries can be collected in several pamphlets. Hence, in connection with the information related to the Arvand, not only are no shortcomings evident, but more research information has been gained in this area than had been in the past.

C) Preparing the Area (Engineering Measures and Transportation)

Parallel activities that take place in regards to training and reconnaissance, the combatants of Islam continue to build needed roads, bridges, prefabricated bunkers [suleh], and bunkers, and transporting heavy military equipment and resources and are working rapidly and hard to facilitate the residences, traffic, security, and protection of war resources. The drivers of bulldozers and loaders are working very hard in two shifts to make the ground usable, as best they can, and bring some order to the very complex and tenuous situation of the area. This part of the engineering activities occurs when in order to prevent crowding in the region, efforts are made to have the engineering equipment remain less often in the date palm groves or not become visible in a way that would make the enemy suspicious. The drivers of this equipment as well as the heavy machinery quickly continue their work under the harshest rain and unfavorable ground conditions in the area.

On the other hand, in order to heed the warnings of the officials to reduce traffic on the main roads, the units are obliged to use a minimum number of personnel and amount of engineering equipment at their maximum capability. Hence, an operation that should involve a large number of people and vast resources is carried out with a limited number of personnel and minimal resources, and the personnel, undergoing much hardship and difficulty, are obliged to carry out their duty.

In the days prior to the operation, in one of the units, when an official of the engineering unit realizes the importance of these operations in the Faw region, he accelerate his activities so much that he is often seen driving a loader or a bulldozer and, with a special kind of enthusiasm, building bunkers or roads.

In one of the armies, when it becomes clear to the brothers that they must take part in the operations in one week, even though the army has just arrived in the region, the entire force in an astonishing manner employs every means at its disposal (including various kinds of heavy machinery, such as trailers, trucks, pickup trucks, and water tankers) to raise their level of readiness. In the course of one week, this battalion with its perseverance achieves such a level of readiness that it enters the operations step by step with the old and experienced military in the region.

In the course of these activities, because the traffic is moved during the night, due to the bad conditions of the main roads, several accidents and overturned vehicles carrying brothers is inevitable. In one such accident, a number of brothers are severely injured. This is reported to the unit commander by one of the injured people, who is bloody and has turned pale. Not consenting to be transferred to the back to be treated, he returns immediately to his work under such conditions. The commander is informed about the incident and a moment later he personally goes to where the injured are being treated and sees that two of the key active officials of the battalion have been seriously injured. The head of the naval unit has sustained serious injuries to his hands and feet, and his first deputy is also crushed badly. Upon the arrival of the emergency unit, a scene of the resistance by brothers attracts our attention. The deputy of the naval unit, who has not consented to be evacuated and sent to Ahvaz despite the insistence of the brothers, upon seeing his commander, stands up and says decisively to the head of the emergency unit: "I will not be evacuated." Apparently, he wants to show that there is no particular problem and seeks the help of the battalion commander in trying to remain in the region and continue his activities to certainly participate in the operation. He stands on his feet with difficulty and uses the wall for support. He stands up straight and says to the commander: "Brother Hoseyn, you see that nothing has happened to me. I am ready. I should not be evacuated." The commander is at a loss for words. He kisses him and promises that after his treatment he will not allow him to be taken to a city to be hospitalized. At this moment, the head of the naval unit is undergoing a serious operation and is lying on a cot without any reaction. Completely at the mercy of the surgical tools of the doctor, he lies on the cot with a strong heart and a proud calm, as if nothing were happening at this moment, whereas a moment earlier, according to the emergency unit officials, he was in severe pain when he was touched on any part of his body. In this way, the superficial treatment is completed. According to the diagnosis of the doctor, he is to be evacuated to Ahvaz as soon as possible. The doctor finds this to be necessary because of his severe injuries. The carriers are holding his stretcher to take him outside. He grabs the door frame and stops the stretcher from moving. Two other brothers come to help the four brothers moving the stretcher, but to no avail. At this moment, this capable combatant, who is relatively aged, bursts out crying, and while tears pour from his eyes he turns to the commander and begs him not to allow them to evacuate him. All those present witnessing the scene begin to cry. The younger ones try to hide from him, but like a child in need, he says to the commander: "I must be here. Do not evacuate me."

Even though the commander embraces him again and kisses his middle-aged face, promising that he will return him to the region, those carrying the stretcher are able to subdue him only with difficulty. After sending him to Ahvaz and two days of treatment, he still resists being evacuated to Esfahan, as the emergency officials deem necessary. Finally, an hour before the operation, while the brothers on the edge of the Arvand River are organizing the scuba divers to begin operations, suddenly this brother appears from a distance from among the date palm trees. Most unbelievably, he sees that all alone and limping with a bundle in his hand he is coming towards the army command post. As soon as he approaches the brothers, he laughs and says:

"Didn't I tell you I'd be here?"

All the brothers also listen to him speaking joyfully. But describing how he has returned and his activities over the past two days adds to everyone's surprise:

"I have told them to bring 2,000 life jackets and..."

This battalion up to this very moment was very worried about the shortage of life jackets, and it was thought that it would not receive what it needed until the start of the operations. He not only comes back to the region proudly, but also on his way from Ahvaz to the operational area, he carries out his duty.

Overall Presence of the People's Forces

The active presence of the Hezbollah nation on various arenas of the war against the Ba'thist enemy has always been one of the determining factors of the victories in various operations in the course of the imposed war. The important role of various strata of the people in sensitive and critical moments of the war and their resistance and confrontation against various global conspiracies have been displayed frequently. In these operations as well, some manifestations of the presence of various strata of the people with high morale is significant. The dispatch of the pilgrims to Karbala at various turns gives a different coloring to the composition of the organization of the soldiers of Islam and provides optimism and great hope, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in connection with the result of the operations.

The participation of the most distinguished young people of the revolution in the lines of the water-land (scuba divers) line breakers and the joining of the most experienced Hezbollah elements of the cities and villages to the operational regiments has made the army of Islam stronger and more powerful. The number of the volunteering combatants have increased by several times for participating in critical and dangerous responsibilities. This wave has increased so much that the commanders have ordered a halt in the dispatch of more forces and have announced that their units are saturated and are astonished by so much self-sacrifice and support on the part of the people. The makeup of the scuba diving forces and also the human and provisional support from various cities is even more amazing. In addition to the Guard Corps cadre, various strata of the people, including precollegiate and college students, graduates, teachers, clerics, farmers, workers, and businessmen, are among the groups that comprise the scuba diving teams. Most of the scuba diving volunteers have been sent to the front several times before and have taken part in many of the past operations. They are quite young and joyful, in very high spirits. In some of the units, at first glance, poverty and deprivation are the clear characteristics that attract one's attention. Among these brothers there are disabled persons whom one cannot imagine to be able to engage in scuba diving operations. But they display their ability in the training maneuvers very well and in addition, they are also very experienced. For example, a Guard Corps brother whose one arm has been severed, heedlessly goes through scuba diving exercises and is quite agile. Some of the other brothers who have certain significant disabilities in their heads, faces, arms, or legs have joined the scuba divers. Another Basiji brother who has joined this group, despite his apparent youth, has suffered such burns to his entire face from RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] fire that one is saddened.

There are also many members of the families of the martyrs who are going through the exhausting scuba diving training with an indescribable enthusiasm. For example, one of these brothers, who is at most 18 years of age, has lost his father and brother in past operations and is now the guardian of his family.

Also, in most regiments, educators and college students are among the main personnel of the regiment. A number of college students from abroad have also joined the lines of the combatants under such conditions and are sometimes given responsibilities.

The cadre of the regiment, who are mostly experienced Guard Corps brothers, are no different. Their composition is a clear example of the strong people's organization in which they have created an enthusiastic community of various strata of the society side by side. The joining of the regular forces with the officials of the regiment is very brotherly and full of love and sincerity. On the one hand, the brothers of the cadre of the regiment are encouraged and happy because of the presence of such soldiers in the service of Islam. On the other hand, when the ordinary forces see their commander to be a fearless, experienced, and truthful warrior, and see his competence and sincerity not only in words but also in his injured or disabled body, they continue their work with stronger conviction and confidence.

Among the operational units of the Guard Corps, officials of this kind are seen in abundance in the lower ranks. There are commanders who take up arms from the start of the war or a little later take part actively in the war and have so far successfully gone through difficult tests. For example, one of the brothers by the name of Jamal was injured in the Kheybar operations and since that time has not been able to walk easily. At the height of the Badr operations, he had come to the region by any means possible and taken charge of one of the sections. In these operations (Valfajr 8), too, it was decided that he would be stationed on the enemy bank to guide the next forces (after the first regiment's canvassing and securing operations). But he has been shot and will be transferred to the rear. However, he does not stop here and insists on returning to the Arvand. And even though his whole body is injured, he can run well without feeling tired and interestingly even chases the Iraqis. He helps in various areas so much that his commander says: "Jamal is a blessing to our regiment."

He goes from tent to tent and visits various groups and regiments and guides them. And since he has been a regimental commander before, they value his military strategies.

Even his commander in the meetings lets him explain about the assignment of the regiment and then he completes the explanations himself.

Another regimental commander is a worker who is not very literate and when he writes down the notes of the commander he writes them badly that they are not legible at all. And whenever the commander's explanation on the maps is finished, he says: "Now, let us go to the bank of the Arvand and you show me what is what."

In other words, since he is very familiar with the land, he puts no value on writing and constantly says: "You need to show me on the ground what I must do."

Hence, in the meetings to plan maneuvers, he is often bored and finally says: "You cannot have maneuvers with such talk. We must go to the watchtower and look at the land and decide about the maneuvers."

But on the field of operations, he is quite different. He fights like a lion. In the same way that he was heroic in the Badr operations, at this time (Valfajr 8), too, during the maneuver training, he has displayed his genius and courage. He rows boats like the Basijis, and before everyone else he jumps out of the boat and swims at great depth in the water toward the bank. He picks up a weapon and walks fast. He guides the forces to the bank immediately. In short, he is a commander who, as the combatants put it, wrestles with the forces under him and puts them to work.

Another commander is a brother from Lorestan who lives in Esfahan. In the Badr operation, he was in charge of an area, and fear meant nothing to him. He did not fear the shots and fire of the enemy and did not heed them. He had no fear in this regard. They only energized him, and he would say: That is the target.

During three nights and days of operations in the area, he had not slept more than 10 hours and was constantly running, shouting, and fighting.

With 15 Basijis, in Hur al-Hovizeh, in the Badr operations, he had captured Al-Sakhreh three times. (Footnote 1) (Al-Sakhreh is a small island in the Hur al-Hovizeh region of Iraq, on which during the Badr operations an intense battle took place.) He never put down the RPG and constantly was using it. Finally, after three days of constant fighting, when he had fallen unconscious from exhaustion, lack of sleep, and weakness, he was transferred to the rear. In the infirmary, doctors instructed that he immediately be given an IV.

In these operations (Valfajr 8), as well, he displays heroism and significant bravery, (Footnote 2) (See p. 198 concerning the details of the operations of the seventh day, specifically the actions of the official in charge of the area) a small example of which was mentioned in the course of the automobile accident, the injury of a number of brothers, and how he reported the incident to the commander. (Footnote 3) (See p. 31)

People's Support

In the area of support and provisional aid given by the people from the cities, the people's involvement in the operations in the region is witnessed perhaps even more than what has been said about the fighting forces of Islam. The convoys of people's aid in the final days before the operation came to the region, coordinated by the Guard Corps, to deliver the needs of the combatants and transport the material enthusiastically to the tent where the forces rested. The people in charge of this task, having traveled many miles from various cities, without the slightest sign of fatigue, transport the trucks full of valuable aid from the people and in this manner display the complete participation of the people.

These servants from various strata, especially the hard-working guilds and deprived people of the cities and villages, not only in this matter but also in affairs related to specialized support, also play an essential role. These brothers have created turneries; engaged in shoe making, tailoring, lathing, carpentry, tile manufacturing; and established kitchen sections in one of the strong units of the Guard Corps in order to meet the essential needs of the army self-sufficiently through great organization. Hence, there are few occasions when the infantry forces face a shortage of boots, clothing, backpacks, prefabricated bunkers, or construction materials to install barracks. At times they even provide certain military spare parts through inventiveness and serious investment.

In one of the units, which is given the special assignment of defending the forest, suitable individuals have assembled from among the most hard-working classes of the society, those who have the physical and combat capability to deal with the natural conditions of the region. It would take a long time to select a group like this, forces that from start to finish in the operations must not only live in the dampness, mud, and stinking water of the Arvand River and among the date palm trees, but must also constantly carry sandbags and dig with shovels. Because they are in constant contact with nature in the villages, these people feel no inadequacy or weakness in themselves. To these brothers, who are often workers, farmers, masons, and irrigators, nothing is problematic, for example, the kind of diet they should be on to prevent being affected by the moisture. Basically, they do not become easily exhausted by such hard work and prepare themselves seriously for such assignments. What absorbs them most is how to succeed in their assignment of building a strong defense, and in this connection they offer various plans and suggestions. In addition to the load of bullets and ammunition they carry, they place small and large shovels in their backpacks. In order to prevent possible accidents, individuals try, as much as possible, to cross the wild river with a light load; but, with the devotion and enthusiasm they have for their work, they do not even notice the heaviness of such loads.

Clear Signs of Victory at the Start of the Operations

As time goes by and the time to start the operation approaches, group ceremonies and programs, spiritual scenes, and pensiveness in the combatants indicate another clear victory. The mood of the combatants is so full of devotion and sincerity that it has increased the likelihood of victory several fold. Congregational prayers, the customary prayer chants, and worshipping, along with the sound of moaning and weeping, can be heard, as if they are mourning at the grave of a lost one. Especially among the scuba divers, there is a special euphoria. After returning from training exercises, despite extreme exhaustion, they help with their special programs every night, and as one they pray, worship, and cry before God for quite some time. While there is no apparent sign of guaranteed complete success, such ceremonies, expressions of interest in the operations, praying out loud before God, and cries of, "Here am I, oh Khomeyni" provide a very successful outlook for the outcome of the operations. And in the same way that the combatants subconsciously have faith in their victory, every observer, in witnessing such scenes and such activities, involuntarily imagines tomorrow's victory as certain.

In one of the armies, six days prior to the operation, about 3,000 combatants are standing at congregational prayers, and the compact and uniform rows of people at prayer imparts a special awe on the gathering. After the evening prayers, the announcement is made from the loudspeaker that the radio chorus will perform a program between the two prayers. The performers come to the stage. The combatants at prayer, whose attention is attracted to a special program apart from their worshipping, are waiting. Some are still completing their prayers and some are waiting casually to see the quality of the work of the singers. Four persons, one of whom is standing farther ahead, stand in front of young and old Basijis. At the start of the program, they have not attracted much attention and there is no change. After performing two or three songs, suddenly upon hearing the famous song, "Congratulations on This Victory," there is a significant change in the crowd, and the forces look at the stage with more interest. With the start of the song, "Congratulations on This Victory," there is such a change, as if one has stepped from one atmosphere to a new one. A great joy and enthusiasm engulfs the gathering. Even people who are sitting at the end of the mosque begin to show their emotions. The crowd begins to sing the song along with the singers. The loud and proud cries of the combatants of Islam rise to the sky. It is difficult to describe the majesty of this scene. One can only imagine the unison of the voices of 3,000 combatants singing the song of convergence and resistance at the start of a long battle.

As time passes, the scene becomes more amazing. As we come closer to the end of the song, it seems as if the combatants have just started and the song of "Victory" fills the air. Even when the main singers announce the end of the program, the combatants continue singing. At this time, the combatants of Islam invite the singers to continue the program. The lead singer says: "Then help us sing together." Thus the crowd, with very deep emotion and pride, under the pretext of singing "Congratulations on This Victory," displays its will and determination to achieve ultimate success and sings in unison: "With the steadfastness of our army, nation, and Guard Corps, our dawn became eternal from the light of victory; congratulations on this victory, this victory."

Signs of such an atmosphere also exist in many of the other operational units, and under various pretexts the combatants of Islam demonstrate in one way or another their spirit immersed in hopefulness. These examples not only strengthen the morale of the combatants but also have a significant effect on the morale of the officials of the units. If there are any people left who are still doubtful about the outcome of the operation, the expression of loyalty in various forms and the joy, happiness, and morale of the combatants makes them more hopeful.

On such a day (six days prior to the operation), in another unit, in a gathering of the Basijis, the battalion commander makes a speech about the grave and sensitive responsibility of the battalion in the operations and most seriously says a few final words to the forces. In front of several thousand Basijis who are sitting packed together in an abandoned village mosque in the south, after giving a summary of the course of the war and its problems, he referrs to the operation, which is upon them and its importance from various aspects, and then speaks about the sensitive role of the forces in carrying out well the assignment of the unit and its effects on the whole operation. Speaking from the depths of his soul, he adds: "The line of our battalion has been named 'Ashura,' and our slogan is 'resistance to the last breath and last drop of blood'.... If there is anyone here who cannot tolerate the pressures and future hardships, they should leave now...."

The commander who is speaking at this moment is impassioned and even begins to cry. Stating how oppressed the Shiites and the Muslims in the world are, he asks for help from the Imam of the Age in attaining success in the operations and requests that the Basijis make their decision at this moment. On the other hand, the sound of the weeping of the Basijis does not stop for a moment. There are old men among them who cry so loudly, as if their most cherished loved ones are gone. The height of the anger of the brothers is felt when the commander asks them, if they have not made a serious decision, to leave at that moment. Upon hearing such a statement, the Basijis begin to cry louder and the speech of the commander stops for several moments. After a brief silence, a group of people from among the crowd stand up and shout in anger: "We are not the people of Kufeh, to leave the imam alone." Then, the commander, in continuing his speech, repeats his previous final words and warnings to the forces. These words end accompanied by the crying shouts of the commander. Just before the end of the speech, the crowd rushes towards the commander with the slogan: "Oh free commander, we are ready," and in response to the final words of the commander they express their loyalty. To show their loyalty, the Basiji youth surround him and express their sentiments so strongly that the commander is obliged to leave through the window and go to his command post. But the forces leave from doors and windows and once again surround him, and the pressure from the crowd of brothers moving to kiss him increases at every moment.

The Basijis have surrounded their commander such that he cannot be seen. A moment later, the battalion commander appears on the shoulders of the men. As he tries to somehow escape from embarrassment at such a welcome and such admiration, again the forces surround him and try to embrace him and kiss him. Everyone is trying to get in front of the others to do so. Among them, there are people who touch the cloth of the commander and rub it on their faces, because they cannot kiss him. Some others run after him and fall and get up to follow him again. Finally, the commander pulls himself out of the crowd and goes to his command post. After passing through the area and jumping across rather wide streams, in the palm grove, the Basiji youths kiss him warmly and say goodbye.

Such behavior and declarations of readiness by the forces are seen not only in such gatherings but also throughout the operational area, in the tents, the bunkers, among the palm groves, and in the individual attitudes of many of the combatants. He is strengthened at every moment in the daily meetings, conversations, and prayer ceremonies by the spirit of brotherhood and sincerity, reliance on God, and determination to achieve ultimate victory.

After his speech at the gathering of the regiments, the above-mentioned commander repeats and expresses the points raised to the officials of the battalion as follows:

"The brothers should know the outline of the operations at this time. In other words, we should not waste time and energy on a force that has not truly made a decision. Behind the embankment, 1 km from here, instead of a regiment, we need 100 fighting, resistant people. It is true that the regiments have sifted through the forces in this regard as much as they could, but again, if you see people who have not made a decision, do not take them to the other side of the water (the Arvand River) on the night of the operation. Retain them. When they see the victory, they will come and fight."

Now with only a few days left before the attack, a definite change has become apparent in all the units regarding relations between individuals and combatants. Worshipping, jokes, and so on, have adopted a particular form. In another of the sessions of the officials of a Guard Corps brigade, which is held for the last time, after some reminders by the commander, there is a prayer session and all the bothers are sitting in solidarity facing Mecca with a special kind of spirituality. The atmosphere is so spiritual and rapturous that it gives a person a sense of flying. At the end of the prayer, those present wipe their tears and after a moment call each other to pledge their brotherhood. The brothers hold hands in a tight circle and recite the pledge.

At this moment, when the brothers are informed through the command post about the hour of attack tonight, they recite collective pledges of brotherhood. But since there may not be another opportunity, they cannot part from each other and repeat it two-by-two. The brothers embrace and kiss each other on the cheeks, ask each other for forgiveness, and apologize to one another for anything that they might have done to upset the other in the course of doing their work.

Some are so visibly moved that they kiss their brother on the cheek, head, shoulder, hands, and arms, to appease the other. A special climate of love has thus been created in this small place. The glances of the combatants in charge of the regiment towards one another are full of friendship, sincerity, and devotion. They know that at least one of them will join the celestial kingdom. For this reason, they most seriously request intercession. Finally, this celestial gathering, after performing their noon prayers, disperses and the last visit and farewell ends.

In the afternoon of 11/20 [9 February], in order to stretch and rejuvenate and in order to gain the strength to continue their activities and endure sleeplessness, some of the men rest. Some of the commanders are restless because of the excitement of the operation, not to mention that they cannot lie down and close their eyes to the scene of the activities of the forces for even a short time. After treatment, one of the battalion commanders has resumed his activities, despite the fact that he has been suffering severe pain in the head and legs for a few days and since before noon has felt so bad that he has visited the doctor. In the command stronghold, guiding the operations, he is trying to rest a little, but the excitement of the operation does not allow him to rest.

Some other brothers, when they see that everything is ready for the operation, have chosen a corner and are writing their last will and testament. The last will and testament of one of the officials there has a few interesting and exciting lines. Preoccupied with the operation, he has not even had the chance to seal it and put it in a safe place and has left for his assignment. In his last will and testament, while recommending to his family that they be patient and resistant, he warns them against associating with counterrevolutionaries and the opponents of the imam and emphasizes defense of the Islamic revolution and the war.

In another unit, 'Ali Quchani, the official in charge of the area, has gained a reputation among the combatants. He has become so contemplative in the last two days that some reason that he is thinking about seeing his new child. Of course, some have also realized his main motivation in displaying such a mood. In fact, 'Ali Quchani is awaiting the start of the operation and his active participation and that of his troops in the attack, and the signs of spirituality on his face express a reality beyond home and family. He has become more silent, but he does not seem to be upset. The brothers have all realized the special state of Quchani. In the last hours, he is seriously busy writing his last will and testament and shows a desire to be alone. This state can be seen in his daily prayers and worship as well. Later, he showed that he saw himself beyond the victory of the operation, abandoned in the desert of light and on the high route to martyrdom.

Final Preparations and Efforts of the Forces

In the evening of 11/20 [9 February], while only a few hours remain until the start of the operation, and the scuba divers and all the units after many weeks have gone through the preliminary phases for such a movement, the last activities and efforts take place.

Such remarkable progress has been made in various areas that at this time everyone is amazed, and the excitement concerning the manner and timeliness of the tasks to be accomplished resonates in all personnel and officials of the Guard Corps, because the slightest shortcoming in carrying out these basic tasks will compromise the entire operation.

The success gained in the most delicate and sensitive actions and activities of the combatants has caused the slight concern on the part of the implemental directors of the operation to turn into assurance and hope, and since the enemy is not aware at such a moment of the onset of the operation, this course continues. Even if so far this attack has been considered dangerous, at this time the forces engage in action with faith and a more joyful spirit.

In one of the units, as the sun sets, the emergency meeting of the officials of the unit ends. One of the brothers takes advantage of the gathering to tell others about the dream of one of the personnel. He explains that one of the brothers, who has been very much afraid during his waking hours concerning the possibility of the enemy being alert, reports:

"I dreamed that we entered an area which was similar to this (at the edge of the Arvand). When we reached the Iraqis, even though they had seen us, they could do nothing. I even reached above a bunker, one of them loaded a full cartridge into his weapon, but no matter how he tried to pull on the trigger, no bullet was fired. They wanted to shoot, but they could not. They were even unable to put on their boots."

They have taken positions at the edge of the river bank in bunkers with a maximum of 10 people or in abandoned houses in the area. Before the evening call for prayers, the personnel eat dinner and perform ablutions for prayer early.

At 1900, it has become quite dark, and the drizzle that started an hour ago increases. Inside the tributaries, many of the units expedite their work. The smile of joy and enthusiasm for the coming of the operation can be seen on the faces of the infantry combatants. Among the combatants, the scuba divers are in a different state, and the sound of their worship and congratulation prayers from a large abandoned house reaches a wide radius.

In another unit, due to the shortage of scuba diving suits, the decision has been made to omit from the operation two groups out of two existing scuba diving companies. This causes great anxiety for the personnel and the commander is confronted with their strong protests, requests, and pleading. Many of these brothers drop at the feet of the commander and, expressing sorrow and discontentment, insist on taking part in the operation. The commander, who has no other choice, embraces them one by one and in response to so much joy and enthusiasm expresses his affection for them.

The commander determines that a 16-year-old brother among them should be omitted from the list of scuba divers, not only because of the shortage of suits but also because of his youth and physical weakness. Aware of this decision, he pleads with the battalion commander for awhile and, sadly, insists on getting the commander's approval. Nevertheless, despite the insistence of his brother, the battalion commander leaves the final decision to the regimental commander. In another corner of the operational area, the unit commander has gone among the regiments to inspect the forces. Everyone is busy doing something and, here and there, are busy preparing themselves, their group, their company, and their regiment to attack the enemy bank in three or four hours, once the attack has begun. Among the personnel of the regiment, the commander suddenly notices a young person, goes forward, and summons him. The young Basiji is a villager. His helmet comes below his eyebrows; he has put a bandanna over it and put on combat equipment. The backpack, support, cartridge belt, cartridge pocket, and all the equipment seem too big for him.

The commander asks his name, the name of his troop, and his responsibility in the operation and after a brief conversation says: "You stay; go (to the other side of the Arvand) later."

He is surprised. At first he looks around calmly, and after realizing that the other person is the battalion commander and the order is a serious one, he is saddened and says: "But Brother Qasem..." Brother Qasem, the battalion commander, says: "By no means. You will stay and go later." Starting to cry, he drops his head. The commander, who has been affected by him from the beginning and for this reason has summoned him, is again very moved. While tears pour from the Basiji brother's eyes, in a decisive tone he shows his hands to the commander and says: "Look at my hands, Brother Qasem. I am not a student. I am not a city boy. I have always worked with these hands. I have used a shovel. I can fight. I am not a child for you not to allow me in the operation."

The commander embraces him and he, too, weeps. In fact, he does not know what to say, so he says goodbye and tells the regimental commander to take care of him.

Among the support units, the combat and engineering and provision officials are busy with their final efforts to open and widen the tributaries that lead to the Arvand, preparing the bank and filling the supply warehouses. In addition, the tanks, personnel carriers, and artillery guns take their positions. The drivers of dump trucks and trailers on the roads in the date palm groves are helping with transportation. Boats are launched into the water, depending on their power and the capacity of the tributaries. The atmosphere in the date palm grove, and seeing the scuba divers and members of the regiments who are all doing something, would excite any observer.

Moments later, as the sensitivity of the transportation activities increases, one of the bravest and most hard-working dump truck drivers searches for the battalion commander with a great deal of difficulty and finds him after a long search. A large middle-aged man stands before Brother Hoseyn Kharrazi, the young commander. He first requests calmly to take part in the attack with the regiment. The commander says: "Haj Aqa, you know that we really need you now to transport ammunition. It is not possible. You must go to the artillery and ammunition. It is not possible at all."

The commander insists on what he has said and the driver also argues: "I must go, no matter what. Any other driver can do my job."

The commander, who is embarrassed by the weeping of a person older than himself, is determined to keep him at his original assignment. But he grabs the hands and arms of the commander and insists. Finally, he gains the consent of the commander and enters one of the front regiments. The next morning the news of the martyrdom of this man is sent to the command center. He was possibly the first to be martyred on the morning of the operation.

Fateful Operation of Crossing the Arvand River

After putting on the special suits, eating dinner, and performing their prayers, the scuba divers are sitting in the areas of the Arvand banks waiting for orders to enter the water. All the hopes of the commanders is set on the advance attackers; they hold the main secret of the victory of the operation. Saying good-bye, the commanders are very affectionate toward them, and one of them says: "You are the dignity of Islam, be strong." Another, emphasizing the protection of this divine capital, tells the commanders of the scuba divers: "The greatest glory is that they are the soldiers of the Imam of the Age."

Not one iota of weakness or fear can be seen in the scuba divers. One's attention is attracted to a group, averaging 20 years of age, with red cheeks and strong village accents, sporting no sign of hair on the faces of most of them. When you embrace them, their strong hands and hard, wrinkled skin indicates that they are for the most part workers and farmers.

At this moment all work has stopped and personnel are awaiting the release of the scuba divers. On a spot on the bank, there is a large crowd waiting to see these brothers off, and no mater how the commander tries to disperse them, they return to witness the safe passage of the scuba divers.

Everyone is preoccupied with the release of these dear ones, and excitement is clearly evident on their faces at this moment. On the edge of the Arvand bank, the commander of one of the armies gives the necessary critical reminders to the heads of the scuba diving companies. All conversations are now in a hushed voice. Even away from the enemy bank the personnel observe silence.

At about 2000, 3,000 scuba diving combatants enter the water of the Arvand River alongside the operational front. A profound silence dominates, and patches of cloud obscure the moonlight.

From this moment, more than ever before, the signs of anxiety appear on all the operational commanders, because moments later, once the code of the operation is announced, the scuba diving force will lose control of the operation. Of course, the procedure has been predetermined and important initiatives implemented. But in practice, full supervision of all details seems difficult. For this reason, they pay maximum attention to the smooth release of the scuba divers. The commanders personally supervise the entry of the scuba diving forces into the Arvand River, and no one knows what will happen next. Finally, the scuba divers disappear, and commanders, assured of the success of the release of the divers, return to the bunkers to guide the operation and await the appointed moment. No one knows what will happen. Anxiety and concern are natural for those awaiting the fruits of several months of unceasing effort. Even though they are no exception to this rule, the unit commanders are trying to calm the others. One of them paces constantly and sometimes goes inside the bunker. Seeing the condition of those present due to the silence of the wireless radios, he suddenly invites everyone to pray and chant salutations. Sometimes, too, he comes out and disperses the people who are waiting behind the bunker for the result of the scuba divers' endeavor. He says to all, whose bodies are mostly covered with dust, who are crying, and whose faces reveal the signs of exhaustion: "Brothers, do not stand here. Everyone, go to your work."

The commander is worried that if the enemy shoots mortars at this area, they will certainly hit their mark. But they cannot leave this spot.

Another commander is leaning in a corner of a "prefabricated bunker" deep in thought. He sometimes gets up and follows up some of the logistic affairs or discusses some points, all of which ultimately relate to the scuba divers. But there is no news of the scuba divers. At times, too, he moves, lies down in some corner, and closes his eyes for a minute or two. He then gets up, picks up the Koran, and looks up a few verses. Then he returns the Koran to its place. He puts his arms around his legs, rests his head on his knees, and spends some time in this manner. A brother whose face is red and who reacts very seriously to those around him is looking, on the one hand, at the blanket hanging on the door of the bunker for it to be pulled aside and news of the scuba divers' mission to be given. On the other hand, he constantly reminds the radio operator not to talk on the radio, only carefully listen on the scuba divers' frequency to receive their code and message. Yet, he cannot remain calm and most often holds the receiver and sits, waiting. All the movements and conversations inside the bunker are followed with curiosity. With the sound of the telephone, all eyes are on the mouth of the person who is talking. All units have been prohibited from contacting the scuba divers. (Footnote 4) (Because it is possible for the enemy to listen, all units and commanders avoid radio transmission prior to operations.) But in one of the units, because of an emergency situation, the battalion commander contacts the scuba diving company commander. The voice of the scuba diving commander is very low. The battalion commander, also, while able to speak louder, responds in a low voice. After announcing that the forces have reached beyond the enemy barbed wire, the battalion commander speaks a little louder, and a moment later when he tells the scuba diving commander to hurry, he continues to speak quietly.

In various areas, the scuba divers are moving column-by-column toward the enemy. They have been told that, in the event of a diversion or any other incident, from every point that they reach the enemy bank after opening up the infiltration passages, they should take action. In any case, there is no way for them to return. They have promised themselves that if they are engaged with the enemy in the middle of the Arvand, in any manner possible, they will continue the movement with the help of support fire in order to complete their mission.

As opposed to the time when the scuba diving groups entered the Arvand, when there was no sign of turbulent water and the water seemed calm, now, at the moment the scuba diving groups have all reached the middle of the Arvand, the calm surface has become turbulent and the waves of the river have increased. This causes some difficulty in the beginning. A number of brothers' flippers have come off their feet, but they immediately swim towards the enemy bank. Some have also swallowed a great deal of water due to the severe turbulence of the river and nausea.

One of the companies is about to lose its formation because of an accident with a capsized boat in the middle of the Arvand. In some other parts of the Arvand, the water splashes so much that the forces can hardly move on the main course. A number of brothers are being carried away by the strong current, but on the whole almost all the scuba divers advance successfully.

Two of the scuba diver officers in the center of the operation describe the passage of the forces across the river as follows:

"When we reached the middle of the water, the weather was bad and stormy. From then on, the guys were really tired. In the second part of the Arvand, the water was turbulent and we began to struggle. At that moment, we were not hopeful that we would reach the other side. Some of the guys were drowning, so they abandoned their weapons. In any case, 300 meters farther, we reached the bank, and alongside the bank we reached our target.

"As soon as we entered the water, some of the guys lost their flippers and were moving along with difficulty with the help of others. In the middle of the water, the current was strong, the guys had gotten tired. Those without flippers did not have the energy to continue. Even I, who had flippers, was tired. There was a lot of commotion. The guys were chanting, 'Oh Mahdi, oh Mahdi.' The commotion was so loud that the commander of our regiment on the enemy bank said, I could hear your voices. But, fortunately, the enemy had not heard. The guys were chanting prayers and reciting the verse, 'Wa Ja'alna.' Some were about to drown and were shouting. I was thinking hard what to do. Ultimately, I threw my weapon into the water and went to help them."

Hence, the officers of the scuba diving companies are trying hard to keep order and control among the forces. They ask the forces to help each other to approach the bank. A few of the scuba divers have lost their resistance in the middle of the Arvand and appear on the bank very fatigued, nearly unconscious. They report on the strong river waves that have placed a great deal of pressure on the forces. But most of the scuba divers continue to fight the Arvand.

One of these brothers, who is the head of a scuba diving company, tells the commander the reason for his return:

"I first started the forces on their way and followed them. Because I was not connected to this column, I was separated from the guys, and no matter how fast I swam, I could not see them. Nevertheless, I got to the enemy bank in 15 minutes but saw that our forces had apparently not arrived. And my own radio had a short, so I returned."

Another commander of a scuba diving company says about the above conditions, "When we were moving, without any storm or cloudy sky, the Arvand water began to swell so that we could not see more than a few meters ahead; we could not even see with infrared binoculars."

An officer in charge of a scuba diving operation adds: "When we sent the companies on their way, the water was as clear as glass. But when the last person left the bank, there were so many waves that the scuba divers say they could not see the person in front of them at all."

At about 2100, a number of them reach the enemy bank and some are still continuing their efforts. With the scuba diving forces in the middle of the operation, busy completing the crossing of the Arvand, a section of the enemy defense line is lit with floodlights, and for a few moments a small area is lit up. The news of this incident is sent from the Khatam al-Anbia' command post to all the concerned command posts to be on alert. This matter has had a serious effect on the morale of most of the commanders. Many say, most worried and despairingly: "So this is the moment the enemy has been silently waiting for?" And the idea that the enemy had been quite prepared to entrap the combatants of Islam at the most sensitive moment darkens the minds of a number of the commanders.

The scuba divers, under the rays of the floodlights, are trying hard to hide from the enemy watch guards. They have started to swim faster. They, too, fear the affair has ended. But minutes later, when decisions have been reached in the command post regarding the reaction and the start of the attack, the floodlight is turned off. It was later learned that the Iraqi commander of that area had been testing the new electric motor sent from Basra.

The guiding forces and those in charge of demolition are trying very hard to find a way for the passage of the forces behind them. Some of the commanders of the scuba diving companies along with a number of others are watching the passage of the forces near the enemy guard bunkers. Some of the other scuba diving forces who have reached the thick vegetation at the banks are hiding in wait for the next order. At this time, the battalion commanders still do not know the fate of the scuba diving companies and are sensitive to any news about this matter. At this moment, because of disruptions on one of the tributaries and the noisy activities of the engineering equipment trying to eliminate the existing obstacles, the enemy becomes aware of some change in the opposite bank. A large obstacle is blocking the boats and the engineering equipment revs the boats loudly. The enemy has become sensitive to such sounds and begins to shoot at the surface of the Arvand and parts of our bank. A number of flares appear over the Arvand and light up the sky and the area of the operations. Only a small number of scuba diving brothers are still swimming to the enemy bank; most have successfully reached the bank. One or two may have been shot accidentally, but despite all this, they are trying to hide and expedite their movement to reach the thick vegetation at the banks. One of the scuba diving brothers says: "With the shots being fired, a peculiar feeling had overtaken us. We wanted to reach the enemy line as soon as possible and not have casualties in the water, in order to have more personnel left to go to the other side."

Suddenly, all the commanders feel that the attack has been exposed, and many of the brothers think that the operation has started prematurely. The commanders are more anxious than ever before. Reports come from everywhere that the fighting has begun, but no news comes from the scuba diving commanders verifying the start of the attack.

This situation is frightening for the commanders of the units who are coordinating and carrying out their duty away from the area. The commander of one of the armies sends personnel outside the trench and above the watchtower to inspect and give a full report. All the brothers believe that the fighting has begun, but there is no sign of the operations of the scuba divers on the enemy bank. The commander contacts the above command post hurriedly several times, but each time he is told: "It is all right. Maintain normal conditions. We will let you know."

In the area of the fighting, the commander of the related battalion is pacing at the edge of the Arvand, wondering what has happened as soon as he hears the first enemy shot. After a brief evaluation and observation of the situation, he concludes that "the situation is normal." He enters the bunker and obtains reports from various centers under his command concerning the strong enemy fire, but he still is not affected. Maintaining his composure, he takes an interesting initiative. On the one hand, in order to prevent any revolution by our own forces, he gives certain instructions, and, on the other hand, orders the commanders under him to shoot towards the enemy, with J-3s, as every night, to inform the enemy of the situation and potential of our forces and assured them that the situation in the area is normal.

One of the scuba diving officials, explaining this juncture of the operations and the final result of the above incident, says:

"As soon as we reached the enemy bank, suddenly the Iraqis called each other, went to the guard bunkers and immediately started firing. And we went through the crisscross obstacles and positioned ourselves near the embankment that had hidden double-barrel guns. Shots were fired constantly and others were also shooting from the surrounding area. They were even shooting with RPG-7's. Shots were regularly fired from the five bunkers we were close to. But we were just lying down below the bunkers. The firing had now escalated. The guys said, Let us start the attack; but it occurred to us that these shots could not be the sign of the start of the operations, because no shots were fired from our bank. After some minutes, the enemy fire stopped and the area became silent. The guard bunkers of the enemy gradually emptied, and once we heard the joking and laughing voices of the Iraqis, we were confident that the enemy was assured that nothing was threatening them."

To the left of the operations, also due to the storm conditions and turbulence of the river water, the scuba diving forces are almost averted from their main course. But many of the brothers succeed in crossing the Arvand, and a significant number of them even arrive on the enemy bank ahead of time. Some also, who have all joined hands, are turning and being diverted as a result of the strong current, but finally all reach the intended area and are surprised how kind God has been to them that the enemy has not heard all their movements and noise. According to plan, the demolition brothers start their work of opening the passage and then the forces crawl among the thick vegetation at the banks to hide in a suitable place.

At this moment, an incident occurs for one of the companies. One of the scuba diving brothers explains it as follows:

"When we reached the middle of the path, we raised our heads and saw that an ambush bunker was 5 meters from us. We passed through the spikes and balls of barbed wire. Only two or three balls of barbed wire remained. The ambush bunker occupants had become suspicious and started shooting toward us. But after a few minutes, they started to talk. We passed through the remaining barbed wire, but the Iraqis had not yet realized it when we came to the path and the fighting began. Then we started to use explosives to widen the road for the passage of the regimental forces..."

Finally, as result of the alertness and patience of the scuba divers, and especially the artillery personnel on our banks, any accident or unpleasant reaction is prevented and hundreds of the self-sacrificing scuba divers position themselves close to the enemy in the thick vegetation along the bank to start the attack moments later (about 45 minutes), with the announcement of the operational code.

Start of Fighting and the Fall of the Enemy Line

The demolition and scuba diving forces are hurriedly preparing the path, finding a way for the passage of the regimental forces who are in the boats fully equipped waiting for the first shot by the line breakers. Some of the guides have advanced so much that at any moment there is the possibility of premature fighting with one of the close-by bunkers. Suddenly, in one spot on the bank, one of the brothers sees one of the enemy coming towards him. The Iraqi soldier is holding a tool and coming closer to this brother, who is lying down in the marsh without any cover. There is no way for the brother to go back nor is there a place to hide. The brother's whole body is covered with mud. But the enemy is walking straight towards him. The sound of the steps of the Iraqi soldier is becoming louder every moment, and he is sure that the enemy is aware of his presence. With utmost composure and calm, he hides his body in a layer of mud and, keeping a part of his face out, breathes calmly. The Iraqi comes near him and puts his foot on the brother's back. But because of the darkness of the night, he remains hidden from the enemy. The Iraqi is carrying an iron pole and sticks it in the marsh and hits it several times with a heavy hammer. He is apparently installing vertical poles to build new barriers. The scuba diving brother continues to lie down calmly and every moment thinks that the enemy has found him. In the end, the installation of the pole is finished and the Iraqi moves to another spot.

While only a few minutes remain to the announcement of the operation code, still in most of the centers there is no news of what has happened to the scuba divers and their presence on the enemy bank. Some of the radios are not working because water has gotten into them, and those brothers whose radios work cannot contact and talk with the command center because of their close proximity to the enemy.

Under these circumstances, the commander of the Karbala Regiment, who is in charge of taking the city of Faw, is sitting in his bunker thinking. The bunker, due to the sensitivity of the time and the likelihood of news coming from the bank, seems a bit more crowded. Someone arrives carrying a package and enters immediately. His face shows that he has had a hard time finding the battalion commander's bunker in the dark of the night and the convolution of the date palm grove. Inside, he goes to the commander hurriedly, gives him the package and says: "Brother Morteza, this is from Brother Mohsen Reza'i (the general commander of the Guard Corps) for you." The commander, whose mind is not at ease, opens the package calmly. A pleasant aroma fills the bunker. The attention of all those present is attracted and all want to know what is in the package. The commander pulls a green flag out of the package and others gather around him. The flag is spread on the ground. The commander looks into the package again with curiosity and finds a letter from the general commander of the Guard Corps that states: "This flag is from the shrine of Imam Reza. This is entrusted to you...to place on the highest minaret of the city of Faw..."

The aroma of the flag continues to fill the air of the bunker. Everyone is wondering what the matter is. The brother commander, who has become very excited, with tears in his eyes, explains it to the others. He then entrusts the flag to a cleric combatant and asks him to raise the flag the next morning in the city of Faw.

The brothers, who have just relayed what has happened, each place their hands on the flag and bless their faces, weeping. In one moment, it seems everything else has been forgotten, and those present are in a different state of mind. Suddenly the brother commander collects himself, goes to the radio, and continues his monitoring of the activities of the scuba divers.

In some of the centers, the guiding forces have faced new barbed wire barriers. At this moment, everyone is looking at the time, the second hand turning rapidly. These forces are removing the wide barbed barriers and the forces are passing through them rapidly.

Some time after this event, a brother whose hands and feet still show signs of injury says about it:

"In the midst of all this, we had cut some of the barbed wire. The brother from the intelligence force said, 'We have no time. The forces have to drag themselves to land any way they can.' Because our demolition person was injured, he himself took the wire cutters and began cutting the barbed wire. But time was short, and the brothers used their hands to lift the barbed wire to pass under them. All the brothers were injured because of this. I also received scratches on my abdomen, back, hands, and feet."

Announcement of the Operation Code

It is 2200. Even though contact has for the most part been severed, the scuba diving forces are still waiting in position alongside the flood dam and the enemy bunkers for the precise sign to start the attack.

At 2205, the scuba diving forces in the Sarollah Regiment have infiltrated the Iraqi defense line, and enemy personnel see some of the brothers, but because they are overcome by fear, they are incapable of any response.

The sight of people dressed in black with unusual bodies (because of the look of the wet suits) is so terrifying and unexpected that all they can do is try to escape the scene all together.

A demolition brother in his report to the commander describes this scene as follows:

"Half of our company was in the heavy vegetation at the banks and the other half on the road. As we were going, four Iraqi's came close to us. When three of them came within 2 meters of us, they stopped to rest. Then, they got up and left, talking to each other, and went to another area and rested again. When they left, we only saw one person, who was coming from behind. When he reached our area, the guys were in a clear column. He held his hands toward the guys (in surprise) and looked at the company from one end to the other.

"He saw all the guys, one by one. He even counted them. He went towards the other four. He then called the other Iraqis. They came and passed by us rapidly. They immediately got in an 'Ifa'; [some sort of a vehicle]. Because they had no weapons, they threw some grenades at us, which fell in the water, but did not wait and left hurriedly. They even saw the flashlight of one of our guys, which was lit at his side, but pretended not to have seen it and left. The whole company went through one area. As soon as the security group wanted to enter the bunkers, an RPG was shot toward it, and then I said out loud to one to the guys, Shoot him.

"Other guys immediately shot with RPGs into the hole of the bunker. From the surrounding area, group 'Two' also shot at the bunker. Brother 'Mo'azzen' also threw a grenade. Other guys advanced to the wall of the flood dam. Here, we saw the Iraqis running away."

While scattered shots in some areas indicate the imminent attack is inevitable, the commander of Khatam al-Anba' (Guard Corps) command post tries to bring the readiness and coordination between the units to a maximum desirable level. Until this time, the preparations have been constantly monitored by the central command post and the lower command posts. Most of the units have reported their readiness at 70 percent, 80 percent, and 90 percent. But the central command post regularly asks over the telephone or by sending messengers to the command post area, which is very close to the area of fighting and is within the mortar range of the enemy, why some of the units, including the "Al-Mahdi" Regiment, are not ready. This unit is fighting the strong waves in the most sensitive area of the Arvand River (the point where the river joins the wide waters of the Persian Gulf) in order to successfully cross the great width of the river.

Despite the efforts from every direction, this unit does not achieve the necessary readiness to carry out its assignment, and given the particular conditions at the time, the command headquarters stops the continuation of the advancement.

Making a decision to announce the operational code under such circumstances is very complex and sensitive. On the one hand, the lower command posts insist that the operational command issue the command and announce the operational code, and on the other hand, a 10-minute delay allows the delayed forces to reach their place of assignment as soon as possible parallel to other forces. At this time, the representative of the Imam in the Supreme Council for Defense, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani, is counting the seconds awaiting the start of the attack. Not being able to contact by and talk on the telephone with the command posts, he carefully examines the dispatched reports received from the front line.

Finally, at 2210 on 20/11/64 [9 February 1986], Brother Mohsen Reza'i issues the order for attack from the Khatam al-Anbia' command post:

"In the name of God the compassionate and the merciful. Oh Fatemeh al-Zahra, oh Fatemeh al-Zahra, oh Fatemeh al-Zahra."

He then addresses all the Basijis and Guard Corps personnel participating in the operation in a heroic tone, "On this day seven years ago, the Imam (Khomeyni) commanded that marshal law be lifted (refers to 21 Bahman 1357 [11 February 1979]). You brothers must also lift the military government of Saddam and, God willing, soon pour into the cities and villages and overthrow the whole government."

The announcement of the code is quite spiritual and at the same time exciting. The command posts transmit the meaningful code of "Oh Fatemeh al-Zahra" to the battalion commanders, and they transmit it to the lower ranks. The name of her holiness Zahra is heard on all the radios up to the company level. The commander immediately goes to a watch site outside the bunker and closely observes all fighting on all lines. The exchange of tracer and artillery fire between our forces and the enemy's can be seen. Involuntarily, he and the others present begin to recite the Faraj prayer. The cries of "Oh God, increae the calamity" in the midst of the shooting and exchange of fire with the enemy is the sound of the oppressiveness of a nation, which despite enduring all the hardships and problems for several years has sent its self-sacrificing Basijis to serve Islam and the revolution, and the Imam has given God such a gift.

At this time, one of the scuba diving companies has been able to reach the enemy bunkers and, hearing the sound of the motors of our boats carrying infantry regiment personnel, realizes the start of the attack and immediately, upon the order of the group commander, starts the attack.

Most of the scuba divers use the element of surprise as much as possible. Shots with "Kalashnikovs," grenades exploded, and shooting RPG-7s clear the bunkers of the Iraqi mercenaries one after another. One of the commanders of the scuba diving group, concerning the start of the fighting, says:

"I myself went into an enemy congregational bunker. I opened the door. Everyone was sleeping. When they woke up, they thought I was one of them and spoke Arabic to me. We were amazed, because when we started the fight they still thought we were from their own forces and would not shoot at us. Of course, they could not see many of us."

Two of the scuba diving brothers also describe the start of the fighting as follows:

"We went to the barbed wire. The Iraqis were working and installing special barricades. When they finished, they looked carefully and left. Brother Mas'udi went forward. The guys followed him with some space between them. He then turned around and said: 'everyone is sleeping.' Some of their bunkers were empty and the guys went in and took positions. We were talking when an Iraqi came and started to speak in Arabic. His weapon struck the weapon of one of the guys and he noticed us. Here, there was a hand-to-hand fight. At the same time, shots were heard from other points and our own firing had started. One of the guys stabbed the Iraqi with a dagger and when he started shouting; other Iraqis started walking around. And the guys killed them with RPG-7s and grenades from near and far."

From our bank, seeing the explosion of grenades in the enemy guard bunkers, which light up the bunkers one after another every few seconds and then destroy them, has created a moving and proud scene. In areas where there is no sign of fire and similar fighting, firing from our bank has concentrated a large volume of artillery fire, 106 [caliber?] rifles, mortars, and large-caliber shots. A terrifying and deadly fire along with the light machine-gun fire of the infantry personnel covers about 20 km of the length of the front, and in a short period of time a profound silence and calm turns the area into a horrifying scene filled with smoke and terrifying explosions.

At this moment, two of the scuba diving brothers, who due to the turbulence and rapid water current have shifted off course to the left and reached another area of the bank, are looking for their main area without any weapons, tired and out of breath. A little farther, an enemy bunker is the target of direct hits by our guns, but Kalashnikov shots continue to be fired back from the bunker. These two are located where there is no sign of our infantry forces, except for the shots fired on the enemy from the river bank. They come a little closer to the bunker and decide to start by themselves. They have no weapons but a few grenades. Each throws a grenade into the bunker, killing the enemy soldiers. They then enter the bunker, take the weapons and ammunition, and begin mop-up operations in the other bunkers. While fierce firing from our bank has not stopped and direct shots land around these brothers. They decide to continue clearing the area, and another 150 meters is cleared by these brothers. Without stopping, these two continue with each other's help. Finally, after a little while, they join their fellow combatants and continue their assignment shoulder-to-shoulder with the other brothers.

In another area, out of a group of scuba diving brothers, only three have successfully taken positions on the enemy bank. After some confusion, a group commander and two other combatants join in and waste no time in breaking the line.

In regards to the way they break the line in one area, the head of the scuba diving group explains:

"We lay down under the barriers for about 45 minutes. During this time, we spread the guys out and designated RPG shooters for every bunker. At this time, we suddenly saw that everywhere was lit up. We realized that the operations had begun. There was no more time for the demolition personnel to cut the barbed wire. And we had avoided doing it earlier, because it made noise. We all rushed to the barbed wire. Because it was high, we could not get over it. One of the guys was shooting from right there toward a bunker. He shot the RPG and the bunker immediately became quiet. Immediately, one of the guys went through three rows of barbed wire. He was seriously wounded, but he got through. I followed him through the barbed wire, along with three others. The first thing we did was hit the first bunkers with grenades. We then cut the barbed wire, and the rest of the guys joined us. Using the Iraqi grenades, we continued mop-up operations of the bunkers."

In the rest of the areas, too, the combatants of Islam, as soon as they are informed of the start of the operation, attack the enemy defense line from front and back all at once and continue to seek out and fully mop up the enemy. At this moment, many of the enemy artillery personnel, seeing the level of infiltration of the scuba divers, shoot at the sky thinking helicopters are transporting the combat forces and equipment and continue searching for helicopters above the Arvand. The enemy forces have their horrified eyes on our sky and are so busy trying to find invaders that they neglect the scuba diving brothers throwing and exploding grenades and continue to shoot at random. On the one hand, the RPG and 106-caliber bullets are not effective on the bunkers with three openings, which are about 1 meter thick; on the other hand, a small tunnel with a 2-meter turn connecting the outside to the inside of the bunker prevents the full entry of the grenades into the main area of the bunker.

These actions that take place in a short period of time are very exciting and heated. Here, once again, the scuba diving combatants display their bravery, self-confidence, and speed. In order to overcome this problem, they go to the roof of the bunker and throw the grenades inside through the openings, from which the barrels of Kalashnikovs or guns are sticking out, and with the first grenade, an eternal silence comes to the bunker.

After mop-up operations in nine active enemy bunkers, "Martyr Banafsheh," one of the officers in charge of the scuba diving company, is among those who in this manner silences another enemy bunker and is finally shot by a bullet coming from the date palm grove. With his hand open, one hand hanging near the opening of the bunker and the other on the roof of the bunker, he is a sight of fearless and heroic martyrdom.

Hit-and-Run Operations (by Water, Land Forces)

At about 2230, most of the scuba diving forces land on the enemy bank, and in no more than half an hour the first enemy line is broken. In this situation, some of the enemy find the opportunity to escape the combatants of Islam, and many of them are killed instantly. In every bunker, there are two or three people killed. The collective bunkers behind the first line are also emptied gradually. As soon as they realize the extent of the operations (through radio and observation), they escape toward the date palm grove. But on this route, too, they are killed miserably under the massive fire of our artillery. At this time, infantry forces, which have mostly landed on the Arvand bank with the help of scuba divers conclude the mop-up operations of the first line. This juncture of the operation (passage of the regiments through the Arvand) has been difficult and only possible because of the bravery and self-sacrifice of the forces, since these forces, with their very heavy equipment in the middle of the night and through water and fire, get in the boats and without knowing step onto an unfamiliar bank (in terms of natural situation), and after their successful landing prepare for mop-up operations and continue their advancement to the depths of the date palm groves. This action is much more difficult for the personnel of the infantry regiment than for the scuba divers, because if there is the slightest damage to the boats, the lives of a number of people will be endangered, and also if the boats do not stop at the determined location, all the forces are obliged to go through the marshes and Arvand water for quite some distance. Moreover, in one of two spots, the enemy has not been neutralized because they are in strong docks, and these boats carrying weapons and regiment personnel are responsible for eliminating the remainder of the bunkers. With the support of direct fire and then the departure of the scuba divers from the surroundings to help the regiments, in a short period of time, they are able to totally destroy them. Every regiment declares its position from 2225 on. The regimental commander reports: "The situation looks good; the men are completely on land."

The regiments are very excited about gaining access to the enemy's bank and land. All attention is on the bank facing them and the remaining bunkers. Boat drivers are very carefully and skillfully going through the Arvand waves and trying to land the forces they carry at the side of the specified passage ways. Except for exchange of fire and the burning of some of the bunkers, nothing can be seen on the enemy bank.

The helmsmen, with signals that they receive from our forces, lead the forces to land safely without their having to be messed up by muck and Arvand water. Some boats shoot at the active enemy bunkers from the middle of the Arvand. Nevertheless, in some instances, due to the lack of suitable visibility and the absence of specific paths, the forces take the opportunity and before reaching the shore, jump into the water with full equipment. Together and in the form of columns they walk through the water and move rapidly toward the targets. The personnel of various regiments advance, some in water up to their knees and some up to their waists. Soaked from head to foot, they walk out of the water.

Several rows of barbed wire and a rather long marsh is in the way of the tired and freezing regiments. The forces that have reached a desirable level of readiness during training step forward constantly. Some continue to climb the barbed wire and pass through these obstacles badly scratched and bleeding. The personnel, with boots filled with water and fully soaked clothes, overcome their own weight as well and move on to continue mop-up operations and other tasks. One of the brothers, a regimental commander, says about this juncture of the operations:

"Around the dock, all the boats moved toward the area in which the scuba divers were successful. Making use of an enemy flare, the guys succeeded in finding the way. The paths have not yet been prepared for docking. We saw the boats gathered. We said, We shall not want for anything. We said, God is great, and jumped out of the boats. We went through the obstacles in water up to our chests. I saw myself that barbed wire could catch on the guys' bodies, but they would pull and go on. Their bodies were torn, scratched, and bleeding. Finally, we entered the area with a number of wounded and continued the mop-up operations that the scuba divers had started."

The commander of another regiment retells his observations as follows:

"As soon as the fighting started, we immediately moved and reached the bank. One of the enemy forces appeared above our heads. I saw the boats confused in the water, and the guys were firing from the boats. The route had not yet been found either. A number of the guys and I had jumped out of the boats and passed over the obstacles. We were in the water up to our necks and caught on the barbed wire. But we went on and made it, thank God. On the right flank, our forces easily came up and, as they reported, did not even get in the water."

A moment later, at 2300 to 2330, an unimaginable silence dominates the entire enemy bank. This silence indicates the total annihilation and mop-up operations of the first enemy line, and in the first moments of the operations all its personnel have surrendered to the power of the combatants of Islam or have been captured, killed, or have escaped.

In the initial examination of the region and the evaluation of the situation of the enemy, more than anything else the lowliness and abjectness of the Iraqi mercenaries attract one's attention. In addition to those who are killed and left behind in the enemy guard bunkers, the bodies of most of those who had moments earlier escaped from the revenge of the Basijis into the date palm groves are scattered in the marshes around the banks and in the forests. After some advancement, the effect of friendly fire shows that the enemy, after some retreat from the field of deadly fire of the our forces, has suffered eternal misery and their shattered bodies have fallen into the marshes and next to the bunkers.

All the friendly groups and companies guided by the scuba diving companies are scattered around the enemy bank in a special order and are engaged in mop-up operations and annihilation of the enemy.

Movement of Support Units on Our Bank

At this moment, the situation on our bank is very interesting. From the start of the fighting, the loudspeakers installed among the date palm trees have been working. In some areas of our bank, the call of "God is great" and the fiery recitations of the directives of the Imam and revolutionary slogans and songs have brought special excitement and dynamism to the operations, and the victory march in the midst of the sound of gunfire, smoke, and explosions has made the atmosphere more heroic and spiritual. To be part of such an atmosphere and watch the serious activities of the personnel along with hearing the victory march gives a person a deep feeling, and tears of joy run down the faces of every onlooker. Many of the personnel are waiting for the result of the scuba divers' actions. With the news of the success of the divers from the other side of the Arvand, they perform their duties with devotion. As soon as there is the slightest deficiency in the operations, the logistics officials immediately take steps to eliminate it. In a short period of time, they put the supplies of the line-breaking combatants on special boats and wait for the order of the commanders to cross the Arvand. The personnel regiment transport boats are going back and forth on a special route on the Arvand and are rapidly moving the personnel from one bank to the other.

In the meantime, the artillery forces stationed in the date palm grove are working hard to pave this path for the advancement of the combatants of Islam. The sound of friendly artillery and mortar fire does not stop for a moment. It is interesting that because of the unimaginable speed of the combatants of Islam and the significant advancement of the infantry forces, they have to extend their field of fire and launch many shots beyond where the regiments are operating deep on enemy soil. From most of the radios, the commanders of the companies report the news of advancement and immediately emphasize that friendly fire must increase in intensity and distance. In fact, at this time, the support fire continues on the front and then the infantry forces advance simultaneously. In this coordination, the speed of the combatants of Islam has also had an effect on the conformity of the support fire. Those in charge of firing are either with the unit commanders or are close to the regiments. They fully understand this complexity and, by making use of watchtowers and the company official, have acquired sufficient coordination and precision.

All the necessary equipment for the increasing support of the combatants is provided on our banks. Emergency units; ambulances; boats carrying water, food, and ammunition; trucks carrying ammunition and equipment to build up the banks...all have acquired full readiness.

At this moment (between 2230 and 2300 hours), the rain has increased significantly, and even though the roads have become more slippery and create problems for transportation and support, at the same time, all the present personnel on the friendly bank seem happy about it, because it will cause more problems on the enemy soil for the maneuvers of tanks and armed personnel carriers.

Commanders and the Operation

Even though all the above movements on our friendly and enemy banks have created powerful excitement, removed from such a climate, the commanders engage in increased organization of the forces. They are facing a large number of radio messages related to various units and regiments, which at every moment request contact with the commander or the commanders themselves on necessary occasions contact the operational forces and issue the necessary instructions.

Sweat is pouring from the heads and faces of the commanders. In the command bunker, they cannot rest for a moment. There is a radio message from one corner of the bunker and another from another corner. Only the commander has the right to speak over radio. The limited number of radio operators (two to five persons) is not sufficient to keep rapid contact among the commanders, and it is the commander who is familiar with the details and immediately solves the problems. During such sensitive moments, the important principle of coordination plays a significant role in protecting our forces who are scattered around the enemy bank.

The commander squeezes the radio receiver against his ear. There is no sound in the bunker except for the very loud shouting of the commander. In this situation, if a person speaks loudly, those present in the bunker immediately ask him to be quiet. All eyes are on the commander. So much effort, seriousness, and concern on the part of the commander has stirred the emotions of those present. Even the deputy commanders in such moments consider their best assistance to the commander to keep silence and order inside the bunker. The commander is sensitive to the slightest sound from the radio, and this care is combined with his careful scrutiny of the map. Important matters are written down and pursued one by one by the deputy commanders and officials of the units. After one or two hours into the operation, most commanders' voices are hoarse, while they show no sign of tiredness.

In minutes, when the line has been broken completely and the forces with utmost difficulty and bravery have succeeded in completely crossing the Arvand, upon the order of the commanders of the operations, logistic support begins. All the heavy vessels start to take the needed materials across the river. Despite all the effort that has taken place in two or three hours, because of the unsuitable ground conditions, the problems of docking, unloading, and loading on the enemy bank have still not been resolved. On the other hand, the hands of the clock signal that low tide on the river is getting closer, and in this case the problem of lack of logistic support will remain until the next day at noon. The river water will gradually move away from the land and the boats will have to stop farther from the shore. The marsh land bank of the Arvand does not even allow personnel not carrying equipment to move, not to mention trying to transport the wounded moments later. In addition, heavy loaders and bulldozers will not be able to land from the vessels. Also, the necessity to expedite the line of defense and build embankments creates a crisis in the plan of the operational commanders.

The boats that are finished transporting the infantry forces first engage in transporting special equipment for building docks. This equipment has been amassed in large numbers in suitable places on the friendly bank and is 400 to 500 meters from the river edge. Hence, due to the small number of personnel, this has not yet been possible and despairingly the brothers have been doing other tasks. At this moment, one of the battalion commanders is very frustrated, seeing the mass of equipment and infantry forces on the friendly bank and hearing (via radio) a request from a regiment for help to continue advancement. The commander, who realizes the consequences of this problem not being resolved and knows that in the event of a delay, irreparable damage will be inflicted on the whole operation, suddenly gets up and runs toward the other side of the bunkers. Present in one of the bunkers is a number of nonofficials and cleric brothers. He enters the bunker and in a decisive, rough, and serious tone says: "...Radio operators, heads of units, clerics, everyone, myself included, get up." Hence, he calls all the personnel to expedite the transport of the dock-building equipment. The brothers all get up and announce their readiness to help transport the vital heavy equipment to the dock through a marsh line area about 500 meters long.

The personnel throw their equipment in a corner, roll up their pants legs, and in a few seconds move in a column towards the equipment. Brother Hoseyn Kharrazi, the commander, who has lost the use of his hand, reaches the area ahead of the others. Hence, work begins very rapidly. Two by two, the personnel help bring the equipment to the closest spot on the bank. In these exhausting activities, the commander goes back and forth along the transport route and encourages them to work harder. Exhausted, the personnel put the equipment on the ground near the Arvand. The commander enters the marsh and, half of his body is in muck, points out a spot at the edge of the Arvand. The personnel again move the equipment toward that spot and with much difficulty enter the marsh. They fall and get up and lift the equipment again. Some have to drag the equipment along the slippery bottom of the marsh.

Three to four hours pass. With the first light of day, the personnel have lost all their energy. But seeing the first stretcher, which is placed on the dock, their exhaustion fades. They see that with such effort the first dock has been built at the edge of the Arvand bank and used on a large scale, even more than an army. Hence, this unit and the neighboring units carry out all the moving of the equipment from bank to bank via this dock.

On other spots of the bank where it is not possible for the vessels to dock, because the commanders realize the sensitivity of the problem more than anyone else, they come to the edge of the Arvand and step into the muck before everyone else. This creates a significant movement on the bank, and everyone, witnessing the efforts of the commander, realizes the importance of the issue.

At 0700, the logistic transportation from bank to bank of one of the active armies has completely stopped. While the forces under his command have reached their destination in an unprecedented manner, and some distance into enemy soil, he monitors their provisional needs via radio, leaves the bunker, and goes to the edge of the Arvand. The battalion commander, because he has been directing the combatants of Islam, has not had the time to follow up the matter personally. He is so astounded by the disorder and lack of readiness on the bank that he leaves other important duties aside and personally becomes involved in solving this important problem.

Then the personnel and several army officials also come to the bank and the commander orders the brothers to pull the boats that are stuck in the muck any way possible toward the Arvand and put them in the water. He convinces the forces to take the parts of the dock with their hands through the muck to the water and immediately build the dock.

Simultaneous with the start of the task, he summons the infantry reserve and provisional aid forces to transfer to the edge of the bank on the other side of the Arvand. In 15 minutes, a significant movement was created on the bank. The quiet and empty bank has turned into a crowded active scene.

It is foggy and drizzling. Everyone is busy doing something. The forces dripping with sweat are trying to move the boats out of the mud and take the dock equipment from one point to another. The opposite bank is hidden in the fog. Boats are going back and forth across the Arvand. The bank is full of people, the place for the collective efforts of the combatants. In a short period of time, the number of boats increases. Ammunition, food, and other resources are immediately placed on the boats with the help of the personnel. On the other side of the bank, the logistics officials with the help of their personnel are unloading the cargo of the boats. And in a short period of time the forces engaged in fighting on the front line are given all kinds of provisions.

Significant Advancement of the Combatants of Islam

Throughout the operational front, all the main axes, except for one or two secondary points, succeed in their full annihilation and mop-up operations of the enemy's first line of defense and also continue searching after the enemy that has run away. From 2400 to 0100 after midnight in the north of the operational zone, a number of tanks, including advance T-72 tanks, are taken as spoils. In addition, a number of other pieces of heavy equipment of the enemy, which can be taken across the Arvand with difficulty, are placed at the disposal of the combatants of Islam in the occupied areas. Using the ammunition taken, the combatants continue to advance and secure the roads and important areas inside the date palm grove, one after another.

One or two hours after the fighting starts, the enemy radio reveals the disintegrated and disorganization of the Iraqi defense lines. Each one of the Iraqi commanders has relinquished his responsibilities with regard to the area he has been protecting and constantly asks for help from the higher ranks. Reports on enemy conversations via the listening devises indicates serious weaknesses in morale and the disintegration of the Iraqi mercenaries.

At 2245, from the left, half the line is not under our control. We cannot take back the artillery that we have brought closer to us, and we are only shooting to the left.

At 2315: (Conversation between two Iraqi mercenary commanders)
Higher commander: What is the situation?
Lower commander: It is a disaster; it is a disaster.
Higher commander: Keep fighting.
Lower commander: Only 22 people are left. We cannot. Help. Help. The 3d Regiment has been destroyed. Only the officer and four communications people are left.
Higher commander: Take the tanks back.
Lower commander: The Zero Group is finished. The Iranians took it. Two officers have also been killed. The 2d Regiment is also destroyed.
Higher commander (with insults): Then, why are you just sitting idly...?
Lower commander: (...) What business is it of yours? Why are you sitting idly...?

At 2355:
Lower rank: The Zero Group and Group One of the 2d Regiment have come without a radio. Officer Jasem, Officer..., and Officer Sabih are not there. The 3d Regiment has come (retreated).
Higher rank: Why have they come?
Lower rank: They say they cannot stay. And the 4th Regiment also says they cannot stay like this.
Higher rank: Tell the 4th Regiment, if they return, I'll deal with them here.
Lower rank: The Iranian boats just arrived. I cannot do anything, either.

[At] 2448:
Higher rank: Why aren't you moving the forces forward?
Lower rank: We have lost control of the area. The 5th Commando Regiment has also come back, and their people are not there either. Some have gone to the 6th Regiment.

[At] 0250:

"The 2d Regiment has been destroyed to a great extent, and communication with them has been cut off. The 2d and 4th Company of the 1st Regiment are under siege, and its 2d and 3rd Companies have been destroyed. The naval regiment has been destroyed. There is a ship (south of Faw) from which the Iranian boats can be seen. The situation is very bad. It is so dangerous that half of the 110th Brigade is destroyed and 1 km of Faw has been occupied."

Throughout the operational zone this situation can be seen clearly among the enemy. Our forces on various axes are securing each one of the targets of the first phase of the operations deliberately and with self-confidence:

The Right Flank

In this flank, the regiments are soaking wet from head to foot but are quite safe, and with the guidance and effort of the line-breaking scuba divers and their regimental commanders are located along the dirt roads inside the date palm grove and begin to move. After mop-up operations each of the groups on the first line is formed at the beginning of the above-mentioned roads and immediately advances toward the predetermined objectives, deep inside enemy territory.

A number of the escaped forces of the enemy take shelter in the community bunkers of the defense lines to the rear and, especially in the defense position "B," think about putting up resistance. These positions, which are 2.5 to 3 meters high and stretch about 800 meters to 1 km, are attacked from both sides by the combatants of Islam. In one corner 106-caliber guns, in another corner the large-caliber fire, are silenced in the shortest period of time by the combatants and are conquered, and all existing enemy personnel are killed behind them. After the total annihilation of this obstacle and other scattered bunkers that cause trouble in the date palm grove, the combatants continue to advance rapidly. Under these circumstances, no creature shows himself on the way, and the Islamic forces go through the roads in the forest without any hesitation or fear and take charge of the area step by step. The rapid action of the combatants astonishes everyone. The mortar launching and artillery units must at every moment extend their range of support fire.

Most of the essential tasks have been done in the shortest amount of time, and there is no pause or stopping. On the other hand, efforts are being made to prevent the combatants from being excited and hasty, and the personnel continue as strongly and alert as ever in the battle without losing their precision and alertness.

At about 2300 to 2330, all the first-wave regiments report the end of their mission by announcing that "appropriation has been fully carried out." The combatants take formation along a road that is a significant stronghold in the date palm grove as the second enemy line. From this moment on, all the regimental commanders speak joyfully on the radios, because none have suffered significant casualties and, with the least number of martyrs and wounded, have taken full possession of the enemy bank of the Arvand River. Among the date palm trees, there are one or two strongholds in which the Iraqi forces take shelter as soon as they see the flood of the combatants of Islam and our support fire.

Even though the scuba diving brothers have finished with their vital duty (breaking the line), and changing into combat uniforms, they move with the infantry regiments and do not intend to retreat. Their familiarity with the area is very effective in guiding and leading the forces, and in coordination with the regimantal commanders, they do not allow any leeway for problems in the management of the combatants in the dark of the night and in fear of the forest.

At 2350, the commander is a little more at ease and mumbles: "Thank God the situation is going as we have planned." At the same time, he emphasizes the strengthening of positions and securing the occupied areas. He is more in contact with the regiments on the line of attack than with other sections. At this moment, one of the front regiments announces the completion of its work via radio to the batallion commander and says: "If you want us to, we can all go farther." The commander, in response, after being assured of the total mop-up operations of the area and informing the higher ranks and coordinating with the adjoining unit, grants permission to advance.

On this basis, while reorganizing, this regiment prepares itself to continue the operations and in fact prepare of the success of the assignment of the following regiments.

At this time, the following support regiments all land successfully on the enemy bank and without being scattered about count the moments in some corner of the liberated zone awaiting the order of the commander to carry out their mission and complete the gained victories.

With the way that the operations have proceeded so far, the commander is uneasy deciding on the use of these regiments when the regiments on the line announce: "The combatants at the end of the date palm grove have reached Faw-al-Behar, the first Faw-Basra (the first asphalt) road." Hence, after the unimaginable success of the regiments that in addition to their own assignment have engaged in the assessment of other regiments, and despite being tired and enduring hardship have performed the duties of the following regiments, along with the fresh forces and combatants, they attack the main strongholds of the enemy to gather the escaped forces and powerfully take possession of each of the remaining bunkers deep in enemy territory.

On the whole, after movement toward the final objective is finalized, a wave from two directions is created to gain full access to the Faw-al-Behar road, and efforts are made to ensure that by daylight all the forces will stand in defense behind the embankments parallel to the asphalt road to a point in the farthest spot on the right of the operations, which have become known as "Konj" [corner], and take advantage of the time to resist the likely and predictable counterattacks of the enemy.

0300, After Midnight (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986])

At this moment, all the regiments, leaving behind the preliminary objectives, are busy at the edge of the asphalted road with mop-up operations and securing the defense lines. The personnel of the enemy two-caliber anti-aircraft artillery, at the side of the road, are stunned by what is happening around them. They may be saying to themselves: "Have the Iranian forces actually advanced up to here?" Seeing a number of people in uniforms, they somehow realize that something must have happened. On the other hand, a number of Basiji brothers are hunched over, moving from behind the asphalt road to the other side of the antiaircraft artillery, and are getting closer to it every moment. At this time, a number of the self-sacrificing Basijis from another regiment are so happy that they cannot contain themselves any longer and decide to take part in this task ahead of others and gain the glory of destroying this last important artillery bunker of the enemy. But before these forces are able to get close to the bunker, the enemy artillery personnel use this deadly weapon against the combatants. That group of brothers who started to do this task fire RPG-7s and Kalashnikovs on those two antiaircraft weapons and capture them. In the course of the fighting, a large number of the enemy dies and falls to the ground.

The only problem remaining is a stronghold near Konj that is surrounded from every direction and also other abandoned bunkers in which a number of enemy fugitives have taken shelter and fire an occasional shot. The commander of the operation, aware of the weak morale of the Iraqi soldiers and certain that these forces will have no fate but surrender or death, orders all regiments to invest in joining each other to eliminate all the remaining enemy. Considering the circumstances, with a full Guard Corps brigade having been able to cross the Arvand in this situation and carry out its assignment (defense of the bank), which is to form the Islamic forces in joined lines from the Arvand bank to the end of the date palm grove (deep into enemy territory) and land many of its heavy and effective resources on the west bank of the Arvand and bring many of the essential needs of the combatants in terms of food, ammunition, etc., to the first line, the sun rises and lights up the scene of the operation and darkness leaves the date palm grove.

Hence, the combatants take control of the situation more than ever before and the uncontrolled enemy forces flee from one side to the other. Some have hidden in the grassland of the date palm grove to escape the fire of the Islamic forces for a few moments. Many of the personnel to the enemy's rear still do not believe the great advancement of the combatants of Islam. A number of them who have returned from leave are hit by the RPG and Kalashnikov fire of the combatants of Islam and have fallen to the ground in civilian clothes. At this moment, two vehicles full of Iraqi mercenaries are moving with peace of mind to bring help to the forces under siege in Faw. Contrary to their expectations, they face a mass of combatants of Islam a few kilometers from the city of Faw and immediately are stopped by fire from RPG missiles. A moment later, two more vehicles with a cargo of barbed wire appear on the road. As soon as the vehicles come close, the combatants, who at this time need signals to inform the other adjacent regiments of their concentration and also due to the shortage of time have decided not to take these two as spoils, greet them with a full volume of fire.

At this moment, a number of tanks begin to maneuver in front of the forces and try to drive the combatants back with direct fire. One of the company commanders, "Brother Moharram," who has been fighting since yesterday along with his other forces, hungry and thirsty, and has infiltrated the Iraqi territory to some depth with difficulty, takes the RPG and aims a missile to hunt the tanks ahead of them. The regimental commander, too, is next to him, but he asks his commander to leave the scene. He is thinking that after an hour of combat and going through the main assignments without heavy casualties, with the control of the situation completely in the hands of the combatants, the commander of the regiment should not be a target, in which case all this joy and happiness in the regiment would turn to weakness. Brother "Moharram," with a spirit permeated with bravery and courage, gets ahead of the others and, with the tank having reached within 40 meters of him, with an undescribable heroism, pulls the RPG trigger. With the annihilation of the tank, a thick cloud of dust fills the air and the forces encourage him with "God is great." Along with a few of his company, he prepares to hunt the other tank, as if he has been chosen to do so. A company commander, so concerned and self-sacrificing, who has created a horrifying line of fire on the line of the Basijis, is suddenly shot in the head and joins the high heavens. Brother "Moharram" is perhaps the first martyr of the cadre and one of the few martyrs of the Guard Corps army who has had numerous successes. His martyrdom creates a spirit of anger and hope among the Basijis, and the forces continue their battle in high spirits.

In front of the Basijis, from every direction, signs of the burning of Iraqi tanks, trucks, and bunkers can be seen.

0700, Morning (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986])

The regiments are getting closer to joining the line every moment, and the remaining obstacles are removed. One of these obstacles is a stronghold located in Konj, and from several directions, two regiments try to annihilate the last forces of the enemy located at the stronghold. In these hours, the battalion command has made an overall investment in eliminating this obstacle and subsequently the full joining of the forces. But, despite all this, it seems that this task has taken a little too long. The regiments report the existence of guns in this stronghold which intend to put up resistance backed by a few tanks.

The regiment that is involved in this matter under the command of "Brother Hoseynzadeh" may feel a heavier responsibility and mission, because before the start of the operations, he and his commanders had emphasized resistance to their last drop of blood.

At that time (01/11/1364 [21 January 1986]), Brother Hoseynzadeh, in the gathering of the officials of the army, explains the problems related to his maneuver with the general Guard Corps command as follows:

"In the sense that creating a revolution is easy, but protecting the revolution and remaining a revolutionary are also important, our assignment is to pass the other regiments to complete their success, and we respond to the enemy counterattacks on the defense line.... We do not rely a great deal on embankments and bulldozers to be able to work, at least not in the beginning. After all, we must use the land for shelters, build trenches, and stand firmly. In this connection, we have made special forces go ahead and dig trenches in the ground and prepare themselves to meet any pressure. And our kind of defense depends on enemy pressure. The more pressure from one side, the more we concentrate the defense on that side, in order to protect Konj, God willing."

In the end, one of the brothers says: "Give a name to this Konj, for example, the Shahid fork in the road or..."

Brother Hoseynzadeh adds: "We intend to give them the names of our own martyrs, to encourage the guys to put up more resistance."

At this moment, the battalion commander expresses his opinion and ends this conversation. He says jokingly: "It is for him; it will be called Martyr Hoseynzadeh."

Brother Hoseynzadeh, tall, strongly built, and athletic, is especially noted among the forces, and his presence in the regiment, even without his leadership, is a blessing and a source of hope. He has individual equipment on him and is holding a weapon. He never stops moving, and with open eyes goes from one side to another among the Basijis. He is a head and neck taller than the rest of the regiment personnel and his stature attracts one's attention more than anything else at this moment. At this moment, the battalion command decides to contact him to get news of the fighting and be assured of the joining of the regiments and then attend to other matters. But he is involved in fighting and shooting and alongside the Basiji heroes is working to eliminate the remainder of the enemy in the area. For this reason, he has neglected the radio for a while. With the passage of some time in the above fighting, the battalion commander seems very worried about not having secured a strong, impenetrable defense line. Even after the recommendation of the deputy battalion commander, who is on the line, he is thinking of a way to reduce the advancement and thinks about a one-step retreat to establish a defense line.

While he is exchanging opinions with other battalion officials over the radio to implement this matter, suddenly one of the regiments comes on the line: "We have made embankments and the forces are established."

Simultaneous with this incident, finally in a harsh battle between the friendly and enemy forces, the combatants remove the only remaining obstacle and, killing a large number of the enemy, transfer a number of prisoners to the rear.

At 0800 in the morning, one of the requests announced that it is transferring 300 to 400 prisoners to the rear.

But this final action, which resulted in the total fall of the north of the operational zone and fully brought the Faw-al-Behar road 12 km from the city of Faw under control, was achieved at the price of the martyrdom of "Brother Hoseynzadeh." Thus, the regiment of Martyr Hoseynzadeh, as he had promised prior to the operation, was formed in Konj to defend the fruits of the blood of the martyrs. This flank announced its complete success at 0800 (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986]) in an astonishing manner as one of the main flanks of the Valfajr operations with a minimum of casualties.

At this time, Brother Mohsen Reza'i, the general commander of the Guard Corps, is surprised by the speed and bravery of the combatants and says: "We were worried about this flank...but this flank has pierced the heart of the enemy like a dagger."

The Central Axis

On this axis, due to the existence of numerous docks and the form of mop-up operations by the scuba divers, the personnel of this axis land in the fastest possible time and begin to advance. But in the other two secondary flanks, they get to the bank late. After sending bank-to-bank fire on the enemy-infested areas of the bank, the two regiments succeed in breaking the line and then extensive mop-up operations and advancement begin.

The forces, speedily and in special order, penetrate the city of Faw from the right, one regiment extending to the city and another regiment at 0200 alongside the Faw-al-Behar road.

On other secondary axes, work has progressed so rapidly that the enemy forces on the first line have started to escape as soon as the fighting began and have escaped to cities or farther to the rear.

At 0400 in the morning, another regiment without the slightest casualty reaches the Faw-Basra strategic road and then secures the important Om al-Qasr intersection. A number of enemy elements who have escaped from the first line and the city of Faw have reached the distance between the al-Behar and Basra roads. At this time, they come face-to-face with the above-mentioned regiment and are totally eliminated and mopped up from the area.

In the city of Faw, which has been the target of attack since one hour after the start of the operation, fighting and clean-up operations in the streets and alleys continue.

In accordance with a specific classification, the brothers mop up the small and large buildings of the city with fire. In front of every cleared building, there is a combatant guard. The sound of the explosion of grenades is heard regularly from infested houses.

Old and young Basijis who are totally wet, in accordance with their training, after destroying the military strongholds of Irfaq, leave them behind. After mop-up operations in a house in which a caliber gun [as published] was working, the brothers enter and find the bodies of 30 dead persons. In some other strongholds also, at least three or four Iraqi mercenaries are on the ground.

At 0130 or 0200, the brothers, exhausted, enter the last hiding places of the city and kill or capture fugitive enemy personnel.

One of the combatants tells his commander: "Well, where is the city? Where should we start mop-up operations in the city?" Despite hard work along with other combatants, so far, he still thinks that he has just finished a village around the city and in this manner announces his readiness to continue the operations. At this moment, the city is under the control of the combatants of Islam, and only in the left side of the north of the city, the command post of the existing forces of the enemy in Faw have not yet come under control. The regiments also mostly have merged and are preparing for an overall attack on the command post.

With daylight, this command post is attacked from two sides, but due to the high strength of the building, they have to use 106-caliber weapons.

At this moment, the fugitive enemy forces can be seen coming out of the vegetation growth and the date palm grove and shoot while fleeing. Hence, the Basiji combatants, overlooking their exhaustion and thirst, once again continue to kill or capture the enemy and to mop up.

The forces of Islam reinforce their lines of defense on the front line, and in order to repel any sort of mutual attack take formation in orderly and strong lines.

At 0900, it is seen that the personnel carriers and trucks carrying supplies without knowing about the presence of the Islamic forces are moving on the two roads of Basra and Om ol-Qasr towards Faw. No more than a few seconds pass before the smoke of explosions and the fire due to the destruction of the military vehicles and trucks darken the sky, and by killing and taking prisoner several other enemy personnel, in front of their embankment a scene of misery and abjectness of Iraqi soldiers and, on the other hand, the glory and magnificence of the combatants of Islam is displayed. (Footnote 5) (Here it is appropriate to point out the cowardly attack of the Iraqi mercenaries in the first days of the war; upon reaching the asphalt entry-exit roads of our cities, like Khorramshahar and Abadan, they attacked the innocent and unarmed people in busses and violated their property and chastity and destroyed all homes and businesses. It was God's will that soon, with the capable hands of the children of the same innocent people, a portion of those actions were avenged, even though the combatants of Islam harmed nothing but a few military buildings and in this manner displayed their Islamic behavior as opposed to the beastly behavior of Ba'thist infidels.)

As the smiles and happiness from all of the success can be seen on faces of the Basijis, and most of the brothers are seeing each other again and embracing one another, the confusion and helplessness of the enemy doubly increases the joy of the combatants.

Despite the fact that the right flank of the Karbala Regiment continues somewhat to have the problem of joining the adjacent unit in the west of the city, by rapidly and realistically understanding the disintegration of the Iraqi regiment in the area, after informing the higher levels and announcing its readiness, this battalion decides to continue the battle and advance during the daylight hours, and all the preparations are made for this.

The battalion commander immediately after issuing advancement instructions from the command post to his fresh and successful regiments, in order to ensure that this matter would be decisively successful, crosses the Arvand along with the commander of the Guard Corps Najaf Regiment and comes to the first line alongside the Basijis. The forces are all surprised that the commander has come there. With the presence of the battalion commander, an astonishing change occurs on the line. One of the regiments reports the existence of a command post outside the city in which the enemy personnel intend to put up resistance with 14.5-caliber guns and requests 106-caliber guns from the commander.

In a short period of time, while the commander is busy providing this weapon, the regiment destroys the 14.5-caliber guns with RPG guns and puts them out of order. With the rapid arrival of the 106-caliber gun and the use of direct shots by the tanks taken as spoils, the enemy command post is cleared of any sign of resistance and shooting. The enemy, leaving behind a large number of dead, flee the building and, in a miserable manner with their hands up, surrender to the combatants.

With the presence of the Karbala commander on the line, a new enthusiasm has been created among the combatants and their morale has increased tremendously upon seeing these brothers.

Contrary to the predetermined instructions, he calls the forces to advance, drive back to the salt plant, and destroy the existing enemy forces and rapidly organizes the combatants for more victories and more complete security of the city of Faw.

All the personnel carriers and tanks that have been taken as spoils have been equipped in every respect (drivers, ammunition, etc.) and announce their readiness. The Basijis have announced their readiness so bravely, as if they are at the start of the operation. The commander of the battalion is himself riding a tank behind a DShK heavy machine gun and personally takes charge of commanding and guiding the movement. On the Faw-Basra road, a number of tanks along with personnel carriers advance toward the salt plant.

Enemy personnel, who up to this moment (about 1000 on 21/11/1364 [10 February 1986]) have not been able to regain their composure and are scattered in the area, face a rapid column of the infantry and armored forces of the combatants. The high-caliber guns and direct tank missiles and personnel carriers target the flat land with awesome fire. Here, the enemy forces prefer to escape by any means at their disposal rather than stay. The friendly tanks engage in a terrifying maneuver against the infantry and cavalry forces of the enemy. Second by second, the Iraqi troops fall to the ground and some are even killed collectively with tank fire. A number of them have no choice but to surrender and are standing stunned at the edge of the asphalt road.

After some advancement, a large command post can be seen with more than 30 persons in it. In a short period of time, all the personnel in the command post are killed and three are taken prisoner. (In addition, a great deal of spoils is also confiscated to be used by the combatants.)

Around the command post, there are separate high embankments that seem very suitable for defense. Also, after 3 or 4 km of advancing, there are suitable places for the forces to rest. Hence, the combatants stop here.

With this action, the siege around the remaining enemy in the date palm grove and the area between the al-Behar and Basra roads is more compete, and from this moment on the forces start to surrender. Also, with the advancement of the combatants in the right flank of the axis of the Karbala battalion, a multilayered defense line is created.

The Karbala commander is himself amazed by such advancement and success and excitedly tells those around him: "It was the best battle we have fought so far during the day with tanks."

After this movement, the next assignment that is very important to the commander is the completion and mop-up operation of the rectangular end and the capture of the missile base, which will bring the combatants of Islam to the Khur 'Abdollah bank and will succeed in gaining important spoils and equipment.

At this moment, the enemy is overtaken by a strong fear and anxiety, and the Iraqi mercenaries report over the radio in angry shouts the continuation of the attack by the armored units of the Islamic battalion and continuously request help.

The battalion command selects a bunker and establishes itself on the western side of the rectangle, closest to the target.

Meanwhile, the Islamic soldiers from various sides, carrying out their assignments, have not approached the missile base. The battalion commanders, after consultations and quick decisions, mobilize the forces in several directions to take over the objectives.

At 1500 to 1600 in the afternoon of 21/11/1364 [10 February 1986], a serious battle ensues between the forces of Islam and heathenism. In the space of 3 to 4 km in the length of the rectangular area, strongholds, barbed wire blockades, mine fields, and multilayered fortifications block the advancement of the Islamic forces. But, despite all this, the combatants of Islam advance more than half of this distance and, killing a large number of the enemy, which have been instructed to resist, take possession of the entire rectangular area, with the exception of the missile base. Around this base, step by step, there are antiaircraft weapons, which, instead of being used for air defense, are now aimed at the surrounding land. The large number of these weapons indicates the fear and horror of the enemy with regard to the maneuver of the Islamic Republic airplanes prior to the operations and because of the importance of the abovementioned base.

It is said that in the last moments as well, because of the urgency of the situation, in order to get them to fight harder, Saddam himself has personally threatened the forces stationed on this base with execution.

Simultaneous with the occupation of a significant section of the rectangular area, the forces fighting in the city of Faw succeed in taking a large number of the enemy who are hiding in the houses and date palm groves and take a great deal of documents and equipment as booty.

When at this time the command post of the 110th Brigade is totally taken by the combatants, several high-ranking officers of the enemy, including the commander of that brigade, are taken prisoner.

The Left Flank

After the surprise operations of the scuba diving forces in this flank, two regiments of the secondary flanks land and, totally eliminating the first enemy line forces, advance into the territory.

Among the roads that stretch from the banks of the Arvand into the date palm grove, the famous "Qeshleh" road is most important and has a more suitable situation. From the city of Faw to Ra's ol-Bisheh this road exists in the date palm grove towards the land, and since the central guard station of the enemy forces is located on this road, the Islamic forces prepare themselves to inflict heavy blows on it and move bravely towards it.

An hour after the start of the operations, the two regiments from various flanks join on the road that is in the date palm grove built parallel to the Arvand River. In this manner, the combatants of Islam reinforce their ranks without the least casualty and gain a stronger organization to continue the advancement and taking of the Qeshleh guard station.

Simultaneous with such a decision, other regiments of the Islamic army successfully cross the Arvand and announce their readiness to complete the mission of the advanced regiments. Hence, no shortcomings and deficiencies can be seen on the path of inflicting blows on the enemy.

The implementation of the friendly support fire on the guard station is such that until 2330, only 6,000 artillery shots have been fired, and the needed resources and ammunition are plentiful on the enemy bank.

The Hazrat-e 'Ali ebn Abitaleb Regiment, with the support of the Hazrat-e Abolfazl Regiment, attacks the guard station and square of Qeshleh with utmost care. The commander of one of the regiments at the start of the attack has been severely wounded but continues the battle at the head of the Basiji combatants after being bandaged.

At 2400, as a result of the heavy and overall pressure of the Islamic forces, the enemy orders its armored forces that have lost their resistance capability to retreat. The combatants of Islam try to tighten the siege and, while totally annihilating the enemy, prevent their escape.

At 2425, the Qeshleh guard station is completely under siege by the combatants, and the large volume of friendly regiment fire is poured from every direction on this spot. But before long the 'Ali ebn Abitaleb Regiment, destroying the command bunker of this guard station, penetrates the enemy forces, and in a short period of time, all the personnel in the guard station are killed.

The news of the total destruction of the guard station and the continuation of the advancement of the combatants creates a wave of happiness among the forces. In the command post, the commander of the Sarollah Regiment and the brothers present constantly look at their watches, as if despite the rapid action of the combatants and the great victories gained, still no one wishes morning to come. At the same time, the brothers all have prostrated themselves before God and thanked God for such success with the least number of casualties. One of the brothers, addressing those present, says happily: "In the Badr operations, we were engaged until morning in taking the target, but now we have plenty of time before morning."

On the right side of this axis, the Fajr and Vali-ye 'Asr Armies in the date palm grove succeed in joining each other and with special organization advance into the land and toward higher objectives.

On the left of the axis also, an unpredictable incident occurs. A group of the scuba diving combatants from the al-Mahdi Brigade, who due to unfavorable conditions at the mouth of the Arvand River (where the river meets the Persian Gulf), have given up entry into the water and access to the enemy bank, sit on the friendly bank for a while awaiting, until, finally, after a long pause, they succeed in crossing the Arvand from the area in the vicinity that has been opened by another battalion, and in the middle of the night, break the line simultaneous with the attack by the friendly boats on the enemy bank. But, before this action, from inside a large ship grounded in the mud, which has been motionless since the early days of the war, a line of fire is created in front of the combatants, which causes a delay in destroying it, our casualties will increase. On this ship, as soon as the friendly boats approach the bank, a large number of Iraqi commandos fire with several guns to disrupt the passage of forces across the Arvand.

Two or three Basiji brothers, who are now engaged in mop-up operations on the enemy bank, volunteer to move toward the ship, to eliminate this ambush. Gradually, carrying grenades and Kalashnikovs, the brothers approach the above-mentioned ambush. After carefully identifying the positions, each throws a grenade at a sensitive part of the ship and fires a Kalashnikov on the forces in the ship. The Iraqi commandos, thinking that they have been taken by surprise and under siege by a large number of combatants, after seeing a number of them being killed, raise their hands up in surrender and evacuate the ship.

The location of this ship at the mouth of the Arvand River precludes the scuba divers succeeding in landing on the enemy bank based on the predetermined plan. Not only would they suffer casualties from this area, but by no means would the next victory in breaking the line as mentioned be achieved.

Near the sunrise, a number of escaped forces of the enemy in the date palm grove came out of their hiding places and occasionally fire at the Islamic forces, and in this manner make their last effort to retake the lost areas, not knowing that at this time the advance regiments have annihilated the lines farther to the rear of the enemy, deep into the area. The follow-up support regiments on the enemy bank have not welcomed such an action by them (the remainder of the enemy) and are counting the moments to destroy the enemy. Here, the battle expands and the last breath of the enemy forces on this axis is about to be cut off completely.

With the arrival of morning, the combatants of Islam slip out of the date palm grove and while taking over the old salt plant and passing through it, stop at the edge of the second asphalt road, a little beyond the Khur 'Abdollah bank.

So far, the friendly forces have taken a great deal in spoils, including 30 undamaged tanks and Brazilian personnel carriers and other important weapons and, with more complete equipment and readiness, are reorganizing to continue the operation to destroy the last remnants of the enemy in the area.

The victorious regiments, which have cleared the long Qeshleh road by eliminating the existing obstacles and have made the enemy flee outside the date palm grove most successfully, now without showing any sign of being tired and in high spirits are happily mobilized to continue advancement.

The battalion commander, in addition to sending his deputy commander some hours earlier to the line, has himself also come to the front line to maintain order and establish a stronger organization of the forces and helps the regimental commanders in this matter. The regiments advance from two directions—one towards the "Khur 'Abdollah" bank to take over or destroy the antiaircraft four-barrel guns of the enemy, and the rest to the left and right of the axis, to complete the mission of the adjoining units. At 0728, one of the regiments announces that it has passed the embankment of the enemy, reached the Khur bank, and the four-barrel weapons of the enemy are at the disposal of and being used by the combatants undamaged. Another regiment reports the existence of a minaret on the top of which a number of the enemy are putting up resistance with a gun.

The battalion commander gets on a motorcycle and immediately comes to the scene. After providing the necessary direction, he goes as close as he can to the area in question, and while shots are being fired at the motorcycle carrying the commander, he responds with a Kalashnikov aimed at the enemy.

A moment later, he reaches the back of the minaret. Here, he sees a number of the enemy running to the Khur bank. Seeing himself surrounded by them, he shoots toward them and after killing a number of them, he joins the friendly forces with difficulty.

At this time, the enemy, seeing the overall attack by the combatants, realizes the futility and outcome of the continuation of fighting the Islamic forces and, leaving a number of the dead and prisoners behind, starts to escape.

Hence, at 0900 on 21/11/1364 [10 February 1986], the left flank of the operations to the city of Faw, that is, the "Ra's ol-Bisheh" area, has totally fallen and is occupied, and the Islamic forces, while acquiring desirable defense formation, continue their search for the enemy escapees who have gathered on the bank hoping to be rescued by hovercrafts. At this time, in addition to the Brazilian personnel carriers, several advanced T/72 tanks, nearly 40 antiaircraft guns, and a large number of mortars and other items are taken as spoils, and the combatants raise their level of readiness to carry out the next phases of the operation.

Summary of the Operations of the First Day

On the whole, the first day of the operations (21/11/1364 [10 February 1986]) ends with the enemy being taken by surprise for a long time and unaware of the situation, and also due to the weather being cloudy, does not find the opportunity for any ground and air response and is even incapable of serious investment in regards to the existing infantry forces and equipment.

In the afternoon of this day, it has become certain for all the Iraqi commanders present in the region that the Faw region has totally fallen and there is no way to retake it. Hence, they either surrender to the combatants somehow or sometimes, being given promises via the radio by Saddam or high Iraqi commanders, leave the region with important military equipment.

On the bank of the Khur 'Abdollah, next to the active enemy missile base, precisely across from Bubian Island of Kuwait, hovercrafts can be seen desperately trying to evacuate the commanders, important espionage equipment, missile launching equipment, and military radar. For this reason, the anttaircraft guns and the DShK heavy machine gun of the enemy do not stop firing in all directions for a moment behind the fortifications of this base, as if at this moment, all the attention of the Iraqi army and Saddam personally is involved in safeguarding the equipment of the missile base from being taken over by the combatants of Islam.

On this day, 950 prisoners are evacuated to the rear. This figure continues to increase due to the surrender of the escaped enemy personnel in the forest, and every moment the hiding places of these individuals is discovered by the regiments assigned in the forest and another group is taken prisoner.

As night falls, the 16th Armored Brigade of the 6th Division of the enemy is sent from the strategic Basra road in addition to the Commando Brigade of the 7th Division from the al-Behar road to help the 111th Brigade in the Faw region. But the attacks of the Islamic forces along the operational front are so brave that the subsequent confusion can be abundantly sensed even among the fresh enemy units. Despite the fact that under these circumstances, the forces of Islam are exhausted, these enemy forces engage in nothing more serious than scattered and very weak fighting. Under these conditions, with peace of mind, the commanders plan for the continuation of the operation, the reinforcing of the defense lines, and support of the resistant forces on the front line.

The Second Night

Start of the Engineering War: Loaders and Mines

The disintegrated situation of the enemy affords the Islamic forces the chance to spend a great deal of effort to secure and stabilize the first defense lines. Bringing the engineering, provisional resources, and weapons across the Arvand River; building embankments and strong bunkers; and creating mine obstacles on some roads and arteries used by the enemy, the combatants of Islam are equipped as much as possible against future enemy counterattacks.

The situation is that the units responsible for building the bank have made desirable progress and with difficulty have succeeded in overcoming the effects of high and low tide on bringing provisions and support. Gradually the bulldozers, loaders, graders, tanks, personnel carriers, and weapons, such as 106-caliber guns, along with jeeps and various mortars, are transported into the occupied areas on the basis of the perceptive instructions of the commanders, and the central activities continue, concentrating on using the engineering equipment to complete the embankments.

In fact, from hours before darkness, the operation changes form, and the engineering war becomes the start of a new phase in which the drivers of loaders and bulldozers are the deciding factors involved in the maneuvers. The [Ministry of] Construction Jihad brothers are the distinguished and active members of the engineering groups, and among them are also some Basiji youths who, most skillfully and fearlessly, without attention to the tanks and infantry personnel of the enemy a few hundred meters away, are rapidly building embankments. The cabins of the engineering equipment are a few meters above the ground; a brother, within range of enemy fire, continuously guides and moves the equipment amidst smoke and fire to lengthen the embankment not allow room for any penetration of the line.

After a few hours of activity in the middle of the night, half the equipment has punctured tires from bullets, but until morning, nothing stops, and the self-sacrificing drivers of the [Ministry of Construction] Jihad have their eyes fixed only on the dirt, the ground, and the embankment. Some of the equipment is so exposed to direct hits by tanks that they stop, but with the entry of another unit on the scene, the driver immediately sits behind the wheel and continues his effective effort. At this time, one of the Jihad brothers (in charge of engineering in the north axis of the operational zone) is hit in several places and, after suffering sleeplessness, hunger, and exhaustion after hours of incessant effort on the line, has to be transported to the rear. On the next day, he returns to the front with one arm in a cast and parts of his body bandaged and again starts working.

Also, from nightfall the demolition brothers cross our embankments with backpacks full of various mines and crawl near the place where the enemy tanks and personnel are positioned on the al-Behar road to install their mines on the edge of the road.

A number of brothers on one of the demolition teams, after some advancement, are hit by random enemy fire and are martyred. But this does not disrupt the work, and the rest move forward step by step and reach the area around the enemy. As sweat pours from the heads and faces of the brothers, the mines are installed in appropriate places. Hearts pound faster. The brothers, panting and installing the mines, quietly return. Because of the damp, marsh-like ground at the edge of the asphalt, they are muddy from head to foot. Yet, they crawl to the friendly embankment with much difficulty. From behind the embankment, gradually the brothers appear like ghosts. Of this demolition team, only a small number come toward the embankment. With exhaustion evident on their faces and their heads and faces full of mud, the cartridge belts come off their waists, and they reach the line with parched lips. One of the brothers, as soon as he reaches the others, says to his commander: "We installed the mines, but the other guys stayed behind."

Those present and the commander of the abovementioned forces (the Qamar Bani Hashem Brigade) are astonished at such greatness and self-sacrifice of the Basiji brothers and, seeing their small but efficient hands, are most affected by them. In a very unassuming tone, the same brother adds: "Give us some water to drink and be refreshed. We have to go back."

The commander, looking at their appearance and psychological and physical condition, says immediately:"Go to the rear and rest a bit; later."

That brother says: "There are still mines to be installed."

In addition to this team, another team of demolition brothers of the Nasr Regiment works to create a hole in the Faw al-Behar asphalt road so that after placing explosives and destroying a part of the road prevent the enemy vehicles, tanks or personnel carriers from moving and coming closer to our embankment.

Also, the combatants of Islam on the two axes of the Basra and Om ol-Qasr roads, while expanding the situation, continue their advancement. One regiment launches an attack in order to annihilate the presumable enemy tanks in the many tank nests to the left and along the Basra road. On another axis, the second missile base to the right of the Om ol-Qasr road is attacked by another battalion.

In the shortest time, the combatants of Islam, with virtually no enemy resistance, achieve all their objectives and rapidly reorganize in a new 4-km defense line between the Basra and Om ol-Qasr roads and engage in building embankments and defensive strongholds alongside the first gravel road (from the missile base to Kilometer 5 on the Basra road). During the night, the engineering officials succeed with unceasing effort in creating a reliable embankment for the establishment of the forces until morning (0530). In this manner, another defensive circle is established around the city of Faw, and access by the enemy to the areas that it has lost becomes more difficult than before.

Also, in order to clear as much as possible the Ra' ol-Bisheh, by morning the combatants of Islam succeed in taking prisoner another group of Iraqi escapees, thus adding to the number of officers in captivity.

In the distance between the date palm grove and the Khur 'Abdollah bank in the Ra' ol-Bisheh area, fighting escalates to break the last remnants of the enemy forces.

At 0430, our regiments launch an organized and extensive attack on the enemy, which so far has been using strong bunkers and a number of tanks (called Tigris, which have six rubber tires) sheltered by a road parallel to the edge of Khur 'Abdollah to fire on our forces.

The enemy forces, which since the beginning of the night have suffered a great deal of sleeplessness awaiting another probable attack by the combatants of Islam, in these hours have completely given up hope that the operations will occur and have mostly fallen asleep in the bunkers and behind their weapons. The surprise and simultaneous attack of the forces easily results in the death and captivity of a large number of enemy personnel during a short period of time and the escape of a small number towards the muddy banks of the Khur 'Abdollah.

The Second Day

Start of More Basic Annihilation of the Enemy

After full morning light, seeing the newly arrived enemy units on the al-Behar-Basra road, the strategic Faw-Basra road and the Faw-Om ol-Qasr road, signs of an impending counterattack appear. The presence and increased number of tanks and movement of the enemy more than before attracts the attention of the brothers. With the increase in fire volume, on this day the enemy is expected to engage in expansively organized counterattacks. But disunity among the enemy personnel is evident due to the unfavorable conditions of the ground and the region.

From 0715 on 22/11/1364 [11 February 1986], every five minutes two enemy fighters appear in the skies of Faw bombing sections of the area. The volume of friendly defensive fire and antiaircraft guns taken as spoils as well as the coverage of the date palm grove and sometimes patches of cloud prevent the effective maneuvering of enemy airplanes, which are forced to fly high and drop bombs at blind targets.

The missile movement and the defensive power of the brothers in the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran has created such fear in the hearts of the Iraqi pilots that, contrary to their initial normal flights, in the continuation of their mad bombing they drop the bombs without any target, fearing the crash and annihilation of the airplane, and some of them even parachute from the airplanes before they are hit by missiles.

One of the brothers in charge of the Air Force says in a report to the general command of the Guard Corps: "Even though today (22/11/1364 [11 February 1986]) is the first day of sight activities in the operations, so far we have launched 12 missiles, 10 of which have been successful, in our opinion."

From 0800, the enemy infantry forces sheltered by numerous tanks move through the asphalt al-Behar road toward our (Konj) defense line. After some movement, 700 meters from the line, friendly artillery creates a severe fire on the path of the enemy forces. Even though the slippery surface of the ground and the mine fields planted by our forces on two sides of the asphalt road do not allow the enemy tanks to move and maneuver easily, our strong artillery fire along the road and the area in which the enemy is present forces many of the tanks to scatter around the asphalt area. As they are trying to come closer to the embankment, additional enemy personnel carriers and armored tanks have created a crowded column along the asphalt road and under difficult conditions are moving slowly towards the Konj. With the approaching enemy forces coming closer to our embankment, danger becomes more serious for the defenders. The Basijis are lying down behind the embankment close to one another and watching the situation. At another point, while the height of the embankment does not exceed 1 meter, all the forces are sharply watching the enemy movement and looking at the advancement for the moment to start collective fire. The armored and infantry forces of the enemy reach within 200 to 300 meters of the embankment. With the whole location of the operation under the control of the combatants of Islam, all enemy personnel attack the line within full range of fire. The fire of the combatants begins from every direction. The Basiji brothers stationed in the ambush areas in front of the embankments throw grenades, and other brothers from behind the embankments, firing small- and large-caliber guns, display a strong picture of fighting and resistance.

Setting on fire a number of military tanks and vehicles, the enemy speeds up toward the embankment in a scattered manner. Here the most important role in stopping and annihilating the invasion of the enemy is plagued by the self-sacrificing Basiji forces. Not for a moment does the fire of their Kalashnikov weapons stop, even some of the enemy who are very close, shooting towards the embankment, face the control and the initiative of the Basiji brothers, and many of them fall to the ground in front of the embankment. Despite the fact that some of the enemy tanks have sunk into the mud and fallen into the holes that were dug by the combatants, another group, making use of direct hits, comes very close to the line. The RPG shooters are not negligent for a moment in shooting their weapons. The area of battle has expanded, especially around the Konj. Even though some of the defenders have joined God, others fire at the enemy lying next to each other. At this moment, they remember the words of their commander, "The line of our battalion is called Ashura, and our slogan is 'resistance to the last breath and drop of blood.' If there are those who cannot tolerate the future pressures and hardships, they must leave right now."

For this reason, there is no hesitation among the defenders of Islam to continue their resistance. Shouting out, "Commander, we are ready, we are ready," they respond positively once again to the battalion commander amidst smoke, blood, and fire.

Perhaps for this reason, some of the brothers display more enthusiasm, and have attracted everyone's attention as they try to help their fellow combatants. Their elevated spirits have affected others, as if they are reporting on their imminent flight into the high heavens.

With the destruction of the equipment and the killing of groups of the enemy, the morale of the friendly forces has doubled, as the dispatch of the fresh forces of the enemy toward the embankment continues. From various directions, the jeeps and vehicles of the Iraqi commanders can be clearly seen. The enemy ambulances are trying to evacuate the wounded from between the burning tanks and vehicles. At this time, the battle reaches a critical and difficult moment. Two friendly Cobra helicopters appear in the sky behind our embankment and come forward slowly, ready to fire their missiles. The Basiji forces, with clenched fists thrusting towards them, raise their call of "God is great" and express their joy and happiness. At this time, the helicopters have come close to the battle area and are almost above the heads of the friendly forces. With very brave maneuvers, they shoot rockets and bullets at the enemy column along the asphalt road. The enemy forces have now been totally taken by surprise and have, therefore, given up the thought of advancing toward the embankment.

After a short round, the helicopters once again appear in the battle area and launch their remaining rockets. The signs of the launching and the strikes of these rockets can well be seen from the front line. The jeeps and vehicles of the commanders of the counterattack unit retreat in fear, some of them burning.

In the enemy radio conversations, a critical situation regarding the Iraqi forces can be clearly sensed. They even indicate the deaths or injury of several commanders of the operating army. Apparently the commander of the enemy army has been wounded and is being transported by ambulance, but the ambulance is also hit by artillery.

At 0930, one of the commanders of the Islamic Guard Corps sends via radio the news of the destruction of six enemy tanks and assures the battalion commander of the steadfastness of the combatants of Islam and the significant resistance of young and old Basijis alike.

Also, it is reported that the maneuver of the helicopters of the Islamic army once again have caused the destruction of the forces of the enemy intending to retreat and escape. Also, many others have met miserable deaths under the artillery fire.

Advancement on Other Axes

Simultaneous with the fighting on the al-Behar road axis, on other axes, the combatants of Islam engage in attacks to implement the plan of "strong defense accompanied by attack." Without wasting any time, while reinforcing the defense lines, they continue their advancements.

1) On the axis of the strategic Basra road: Islamic forces stationed on the front line take voluntary actions, despite the planning of higher military commanders.

Hazrat-e Rasul Battalion of the Najaf-e Ashraf Regiment, which has been sent to the area since yesterday and has not had an opportunity so far to engage in operations with the normal enthusiasm they have for participation in operations, is assigned to advance toward the salt plant to the left of the strategic road and cleanse the area of the filth of the enemy. This battalion takes over the command posts of the enemy one after another and, at 0900, a little beyond the crossing of the oil pipes with the Basra road (7 km from Faw), takes its position in the enemy command posts. The forces make use of the embankments created around these command posts and open fire towards the infantry personnel of the enemy, who are making preparations to advance towards Faw in the command posts across from them close by.

In this manner, after killing a number of the enemy, the Islamic forces quickly place mini-Katushas, TOW missiles, Malyutka, etc., behind the existing embankments in the area, and in this way prepare themselves to confront the enemy counterattacks on this axis.

2) To the left of the city of Faw, the combatants increase their attacks and from every direction tighten their circle of siege in order to fully take over and destroy one of the enemy command posts, in which a number of Iraqi mercenaries optimistically continue resistance under the influence of the high-ranking Iraqi army command or the person of Saddam and refuse to surrender, thinking that they will certainly be rescued.

Even though until this moment a serious attempt has not been made to bring them to their knees, at 1000, the combatants of the Fajr Regiment succeed in killing them and in addition to killing and wounding a number of them, take about 100 of them as prisoners.

Enemy Movements on the Basra Road Axis

Between 1030-1100 on 22/11/1364 [11 February 1986], scouts report a column made up of dozens of jeeps, trucks, trailers, busses, tanks, and armored personnel carriers along the Basra road moving towards Faw. The kind of movement and the appearance of the column reveal that two or three brigades have been assigned to prevent the movement of the combatants of Islam into the region. Moreover, the manner of the entry of these units into the region shows the lack of awareness and unfamiliarity in regards to the situation in the region.

The telephone conversations of the Iraqi commanders clearly indicate that the newly arrived combat units have been told that from then on they should only watch the next movements of the Iranian combatants. This indicates that the retaking of the city of Faw under these conditions is no longer an issue.

Under such circumstances, the level of advancement of our units and the formation of the Iranian soldiers is very interesting. The morale of our forces is very high. Contrary to the past, when they reacted to the counterattacks of the enemy without any hesitation or fear, they are now silent in an effort to entrap the enemy forces.

The column is coming closer every moment, before the eyes of the Basijis. In unprecedented coordination, the Basijis deter any shooting or fighting and are only waiting for the arrival of the enemy forces. Careless and oblivious to the seemingly calm situation, without any preliminary studies, the enemy enters the trap of the Islamic forces. The forces urge each other to be silent and avoid firing. The enemy forces are getting extremely close to our defense line along the Basra road. In a split second, all the lines fire with various 106-caliber, Malyutka, TOW, DShk, and RPG-7 weapons and the weapons of the Basijis. Our artillery also carefully fires on the road. The shower of bullets from the Islamic army is concentrated on the armored equipment and personnel of the enemy.

Many of the enemy forces, who do not even have the chance to leave their vehicles (busses, flat-bed trailers, trucks, etc.), are killed inside their vehicles in the first moments of the fighting. Smoke and fire fill the area, and the horrible sound of the explosion of tank missiles rises to the sky.

All vehicles that make up the above-mentioned column are on fire or have overturned. A mass of the bodies of the enemy is left on the road, and the remaining enemy personnel are trying to find a way to escape. Some of them are captured, and the remainder, after some retreat, have taken positions at a distance from our embankment.

The commander of the Karbala Command Post in his report to the Khatam Command Post via radio describes the situation as follows: "The region has become a slaughterhouse of the enemy. Too many of them have been killed to count. The equipment has been especially effective in destroying the enemy."

Second Counterattack on the al-Behar Road Axis

In the continuation of today's efforts (22/11/1364 [11 February 1986]), after regrouping and reinforcing their armored and infantry forces, the enemy forces prepare for another counterattack on the combatants of Islam at 1400.

The enemy begins its counterattack fully equipped by strongly targeting our defense line with simultaneous air strikes and artillery fire.

To the left of the road, the enemy infantry forces, and along the road the tanks and armored personnel carriers, are more concentrated. Even though in the early moments of the counterattack our artillery does not seem very active, the brave Basijis in front of the embankments inside the prefabricated bunkers have taken positions against the enemy tanks and by shooting RPGs and throwing grenades, have created a fearful environment for the enemy.

On the other hand, because of the water between us and the enemy and a large ditch 500 to 600 meters from the asphalt road, the tanks cannot maneuver and are forced to fire from a distance. Also, because of the mine fields set by our forces on the right side of the road, some of them are incapable of moving. The regimental commander summons the artillery officials immediately, and the necessary coordination for effective fire against the enemy is implemented.

Our artillery fire is concentrated around the Konj to leave no safety for the infantry and armored forces of the enemy, creating a great deal of fear among them.

Tolerating exhaustion and injuries, the defenders of Islam continue to counter the tanks and enemy personnel with grenades and small-caliber weapons.

At 1730, when the battle has escalated, the presence of Cobra helicopters in the sky once again erases the exhaustion of our forces, and joy at the significant and effective actions is evident on their faces. They consider the helicopter maneuvers so successful that they pressure the commander of the operations by every means possible to repeat a similar scene. They send messengers or via radio frequently request that the Cobras return. In these moments, the Air Force attacks increase the morale of the forces.

Several fighter bombers appear alongside the Faw-Basra road, right before the eyes of the combatants, who are engaged in fighting and resistance, and bomb the enemy around the strategic road. A full-fledged battle has begun between the forces of Islam and heathenism, and the strong, brave lines of the defendants of Islam leave no room for the penetration and infiltration of the enemy. They have made the enemy struggle and have destroyed the enemy even more than in the morning counterattack, despite its reorganization.

Finally, at 1700, after three hours of serious fighting without any results, the enemy forces retreat with a mass of dead and wounded, leaving behind spoils such as equipment, tanks, and personnel carriers, and stand in defense 1 km from our defense line.

Occupation of the First Missile Base

Freed from the likelihood of enemy threats against other axes, now, in order to fully destroy the first missile base (located at the end of the rectangular area) and to prevent the escape of a number who were fleeing on hovercrafts from the Khur 'Abdollah, the combatants of Islam move along a road on the edge of the Khur bank towards the southeast angle of the rectangle, heading to destroy the existing enemy forces on their path and fully occupy this base as well.

After conquering and leaving behind a number of embankments and strong fortifications, at about 1000, the forces take prisoner 40 enemy personnel and evacuate them to the rear. They also take control of a large part of the Khur 'Abdollah bank. The Islamic forces see about 1,000 pairs of boots in one area of the bank, which are arranged two-by-two. A little farther, they see enemy forces whose bodies are sunk halfway into mud and who, stunned and confused, are waiting to be rescued. At first glance, it becomes clear that these individuals are mainly those who escaped from the date palm grove and retreated from the Ra's ol-Bisheh area to this point, and have thrown themselves into the marsh on the Khur bank to be rescued. As soon as they see the advancement and attack of our forces once again, they fearfully try to escape to one side or another, and thinking that they soon will be killed, look for shelter. Some of them, being very tired and helpless, show an inclination to surrender. One of them, after being sure of the Islamic kindness of the combatants, calls to the others to land and surrender.

Out of extreme exhaustion resulting from walking a great deal in the mud, seeing the welcome of the Islamic forces, they express their desire to surrender and seek asylum. Their entire bodies are covered with a layer of mud and they walk with difficulty on the marsh-like bank, panting. With abject faces, they only look at the combatants of Islam on the land. Some crawl on the ground, and with muddy heads and faces rise up again and continue walking. Some of them seem unconscious or to be dying and are rolling on the surface of the marsh. A crowd of about 300, with utmost difficulty in an unorganized and haphazard manner, slowly comes to the bank. This scene is evidence of the misery and abjectness of the forces of the Iraqi army. So imploringly and helplessly, they ask for help from the Islamic forces. With weak morale, empty of faith, and in fear of death, they hope for life once again. To rescue them, the brothers make use of ropes and help those who cannot move to be freed from the muck. The first individuals of this group to approach the land, seeing the efforts that the brothers are making to welcome them as soon as they get there, become very happy and speed up their steps somewhat. These individuals have not yet slept on the land when they throw themselves on the bank and, seeming to faint, throw themselves prostrate on the ground. In the meantime, some of them open their eyes after drinking some water and report that their number is large. Some have died, and others are dying.

Finally, the brothers succeed in bringing out the majority of these people with ropes and other available means. After feeding them, offering them something to drink, and changing their clothes, they evacuate them to the rear. (Footnote 6) (The Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran showed a film of this scene.) Simultaneously, the combatants of the Sarollah Regiment unceasingly try to eliminate the existing obstacles around the missile base, annihilate the personnel, and occupy the base while trying to join the Karbala and Fajr Regiments.

At 1230, the 'Ali ebn Abitaleb Regiment infiltrates from the right side and the east side of the base, and the Karbala Regiment, after passing the razit mast [as published] located on the southern side of the base, at 1338, succeeds in capturing four tanks and an enemy artillery brigade and engages in totally mopping up the rectangular area. Finally, at 1400, the first missile base has completely fallen, and 100 persons have been taken prisoner. Then the regiments of Islam join.

In this attack also, 40 37-, 14.5-, and 57-mm antiaircraft defense guns; two vehicles containing chemical gas masks; one piece of 120-mile radar equipment; one vehicle carrying (deadly) missiles; and a large number of vehicles, ammunition, etc., are taken as spoils by the combatants of Islam.

The Third Night

Continuation of Attacks on the Basra and Om ol-Qasr Road Axes

From early evening, in addition to carrying out activities such as support for the forces on the line, creating defense strongholds, and creating mine obstacles, as well as continuing their unceasing attacks, at 2100, they are ready for the third phase of advancement and diversionary tactics in other areas to gain access to the wide salt lake through the two roads of Basra and Om ol-Qasr.

Attack on the Basra Road Axis

On the axis, in front of the combatants of Islam, an enemy column has been damaged in the enemy's unsuccessful attempted counterattack of yesterday. This column, which is stationed at the intersection of the gravel road and the asphalt road (three roads intersect southwest of the salt plant at 7 km of the Faw-Basra road), is reinforced to prevent the continuous attacks of the combatants and temporarily and hastily has formed a defense line to supposedly create an obstacle. However, since the enemy has given up on Faw and realizes the aggressive nature of our forces, it only serves to maintain the status quo and ensure their maneuverability for counterattacks on the next day.

At 2130, our forces start to move from both sides of this road. Before long, to the left of the road, the enemy is prepared to ambush. It is aware of the attack of the Islamic forces; the attack has been predicted, and they respond. This ambush, located near the enemy defense line, is destroyed by our special penetration forces in a short fight and the obstacle removed. In this fight, the cross-fire increases, and a number of brothers, especially the brothers of the penetration group, are martyred.

The fire of tanks, mortars, machine guns, and other light and heavy weapons, especially artillery and Katusha fire, is carried out by both sides, and the ground shakes as a result of the showering bullets.

A severe battle has begun between our forces and the enemy infantry forces, which involves the throwing of grenades, hand-to-hand combat, and the exchange of light and heavy machine-gun fire at close range. One of the commanders of the penetration force reports on the large number of enemy troops. The commander of the regiment responds: You were counting the moments, which were hours. There is fighting everywhere. Fight. (Footnote 7) (At 2315, from our listening post it is reported that all forces have told their commander: Only one machine gun remains on their battle line, and they are completely surrounded by the combatants of Islam. Moments later, it is reported that the enemy forces are pressuring their commander to retreat.)

To the right of the road, the fire and fighting of the infantry is less severe. For this reason, the regiment assigned along this axis has advanced even farther than the objective and is neutralizing a large number of ambushes on its way.

This regiment reaches the rear of the enemy in battle with our regiments on the left of the road, which has been an obstacle to the advancement of that regiment. Advancing, this regiment makes the enemy line on the left of the road more vulnerable moment by moment. But in being cautious, against the danger of circling the friendly forces, the regimental commander does not allow further advancement by the eager Basijis and prefers coordination with the adjacent regiment.

Simultaneous with such a decision, the enemy also is afraid of being surrounded by the forces along the gravel road (ending in the asphalt road) and sends some forces to counter this regiment to the right of the asphalt road.

The regimental commander, describing this juncture of the operations, says:

"Even though all its artillery, tank, machine gun, and grenade power was pouring fire around us, I ordered the guys to advance and said, without paying any attention, that they should go toward the left side of the road. But, suddenly I saw that the enemy is throwing grenades next to the asphalt road (the left of the road) to this side. Considering that we hade gone 500 meters beyond the enemy forces, which were on the left of the road, and up to 1 km behind us was under fire, I ordered the men to halt and then retreat."

The regimental commander on the left of the road also says about the advancement of his regiment:

"We set out with a company on the left, a company on the right, and a special team ahead. We were advancing on flat land when we came across the enemy. Other special teams engaged in battle with the enemy from two sides. On the right, the enemy was spread from the edge of the asphalt to near the white oil pipes and at the side of the road it had either built embankments or dug trenches. Nevertheless, the company was on our right (on the left of the asphalt) well advanced. But the company on the left, because the enemy had placed tanks mostly around the white oil pipelines and in its command posts and bases, could not advance; then, with the grounding of this regiment, the rest stopped."

Under the conditions of continued fighting, with our forces in very serious danger, every moment the number of personnel, fire, and heavy weapons of the enemy increases. But the combatants continue the attack, breaking lines and examining various procedures to ensure that, while destroying the battle formations of the enemy, they would find the opportunity to create embankments at a closer proximity.

At 2400, the combat engineering brothers, who have so far followed the infantry regiments and are awaiting orders to build embankments in predetermined spots, begin to work and simultaneous with carrying out this task, they are given orders to use strong artillery fire.

At 0100, one of the brothers who has returned from the front line informs the commander of the operations about the current situation of fighting on the line and reports on the increase of machine guns and tanks on the left flank of our forces. Also, the regimental commander, who has recently been assigned along with his forces to help our forces, reports via radio: "We are fighting bunker to bunker."

Finally, considering the increasing fire and expanding enemy infantry forces, the commander of the operation on this axis decides to delay advancing the forces and calls them back.

One of the effects of the attack on the Basra road axis is not to give the enemy a chance to further prepare for a counterattack in this area on the next day in order to cut through our first line of defense as much as possible and get a little closer to the city of Faw.

On the other hand, simultaneous with the start of this fighting, on the Om ol-Qasr road axis, as well, the combatants achieve some victories, which are much more important than the recent attack, and following this attack a large portion of the important objectives of the Basra road axis is also secured.

Advancement on the Om ol-Qasr Road Axis

Our forces, which on the axis entirely occupy the second missile base (on the right side of the Om al-Qasr road), have taken a position on it, have also stood in defense alongside the first gravel road, and up to this moment (third night) have prepared themselves for any counterattack by the enemy. Following the serious decision of the commander of the Islamic Regiment, since 2130, they have been preparing for an attack and carrying out another attack on the southern wall of the salt plant.

The Rasulollah soldiers of the two regiments of Malek and Ansar are ready to move from the second missile base in organized lines to occupy the third missile base of the enemy on the left of the Om ol-Qasr road and then destroy and occupy the command headquarters of the 26th Division of the enemy located west of the salt plant. The combatants of the Hazrat-e 'Ali ebn Abitaleb Regiment, too, are getting ready to occupy the second gravel road (extended from the second missile road to the salt plant) to attack on another side and destroy and occupy the command headquarters of the 26th Division.

At 2230, the combatants of the Malek Regiment cross our defense line and on the right side of the Om ol-Qasr road move towards the determined objectives. The conditions are that contrary to the current situation on the right side of the operational zone, there is relative calm on this axis and little sign of the cross fire of heavy or light weapons. The combatants are getting closer to the target, step by step.

At 2310, as soon as they see the enemy ambushes set up near the missile base, the forces open fire and powerfully attack the enemy. In the first minutes, the enemy forces flee.

The combatants follow them into the missile base and clear them from both sides (around the existing road on the base). Most rapidly, the commander sends every group to clear the 500 meter to 2 km positions around the base, which end in numerous bunkers and strongholds. In a short period of time, the Islamic forces search all the parts of the base and the surrounding area, but, except for technical and military equipment, do not see any sign of the Iraqi mercenaries. It seems as if at the start of the fighting, a few remaining enemy forces in the base had also escaped. The Ansar Regiment, which from the beginning has followed the Malek Regiment, a short while after being sure of the full occupation of the first objective, continues its movement along the road. In the meantime, it is also observed that the enemy forces flee from the combatants and, after destroying the large arms and ammunition warehouses, escape to the rear so that as a result of the explosion of enemy ammunition bunkers, the Om ol-Qasr asphalt road is all lit up like daylight, and, therefore, movement is clearly seen. In such a situation, Brother Dastvareh (deputy commander of the Hazrat-e Rasul Regiment) is present step by step on the front line with other combatants of Islam and, seeing the disintegrated situation of the enemy, guides and directs the forces to take better and more rapid advantage of the situation. He sends one company from the juncture of the gravel road and the asphalt road to the right towards the 26th Division and two other companies along with a follow-up support regiment to advance along the asphalt road. Upon the increasing insistence of Brother Dastvareh, our forces are moved forward to create a strong defense in an appropriate place to close the next movement of the enemy on the Om ol-Qasr road.

After walking about another 1.5 km, they stop at a spot along the road, which is surrounded by water from two sides, and the only way for the enemy to pass is to go through the narrow Om ol-Qasr road. They choose this point as the surest and most suitable spot to confront the future counterattacks of the enemy.

On another axis, simultaneous with the movement of a company towards the command post of the 26th Division, one special company called "Martyrdom" moves after the above regiment. This time also, the combatants of Islam after fully occupying the second gravel road and landing in the salt plant (extended from the missile base) succeeded in coming close to the command post of the 26th Division to engage in action in cooperation with our other forces to the left of the command post.

The commander of Hazrat Ma'sumeh Regiment says about these operations:

"By the time we came near the command post (26th Division), we only had one casualty and had not really been fighting, because with the fare amount of fire with which we were showering the enemy, the enemy evacuated its positions and 70 or 80 of these escaped forces took shelter in the command post of the 26th Division and without any organization took possession of it."

On this axis, the enemy is not actively engaged, and only a few individuals are seen here and there. The forces attack the target from two sides and the command post of the 26th Division is fully occupied by the combatants of Islam without the least sign of resistance by enemy forces. In the meantime, a number of enemy personnel are killed, and most people, leaving behind ammunition, equipment, and provisions, escape in shame.

At 0230, all the missions have been completed successfully. The engineering and demolition units, in order to build a stronger defense line, succeed in creating embankments in the places where the forces will stop, and in a spot of the asphalt they make a ditch with explosives and in this way block the road. Also, in front of our defense forces, wire fields are created. On the whole, the combatants of Islam end the third night of the operation on this axis, with the following results:

Full occupation of the enemy army command post.

Killing and taking prisoner a number of the enemy.

Taking as spoils several 130-mm artillery guns and a large number of 23-, 57-, 35- and 37-mm guns.

Taking possession of another several kilometers of enemy territory and creating a more secure defense line in the entry arteries of the city of Faw.

The Third Day

Counterattack on the Coastal Axis (Date Palm Grove)

On 23/11/1364 [12 February 1986], at about 0300, in the northernmost point of the front, inside the date palm grove and at the edge of the Arvand River, preparations are made for a massive counterattack with heavy artillery fire and such things as direct tank fire on our positions.

So far, our defense forces have made every effort to repel the enemy's every effort to gain access to the embankments and drive back the combatants of Islam. On the first day, the operations of a large number of escapees from the enemy defense line that engaged in some actions are destroyed; and on the second day, as well, the existing infantry brigade in the region is destroyed. Until now, despite the pressures, the forces succeed in building a relatively desirable embankment from the bank of the Arvand to the end of the date palm grove (toward the al-Behar asphalt road). Now, according to reports, the commando forces of the Iraqi army are determined to break our line and are once again testing their will and determination to penetrate the position of the Islamic forces.

Our forces are established behind a long embankment among the date palm trees and are watching the enemy movements from a close range. Within minutes of the intense fire of the enemy's heavy artillery the Iraqi infantry commandoes attack our embankment. In an instant, the air is filled with the sound of fire arms and the exchange of tracer bullets, and the barrels of small and large weapons light up the date palm grove. Because reciprocal fighting has begun at close range, the infantry forces engage in throwing grenades.

A serious battle has begun near our embankment and continues in the form of hand-to-hand combat. Simultaneous with the resistance of the Basiji combatants, our artillery fires on the enemy forces in front of our embankment. The volume of fire is so intense that it has created deep fear among the enemy forces. The RPG shooters are stuck to the embankment in high spirits and are continuously firing their missiles toward the enemy tanks that are firing at our trenches.

The experienced enemy commanders attack the embankment group by group. One group is killed, another appears in the midst of the fire of the combatants of Islam. But, despite these pressures, the sound of the firing of weapons by the Basijis does not stop for a moment, and in any way possible, both with firearms and bayonets, the number of enemy dead increases. Here, there is a display of the power of faith in the divine values with regard to the advanced military techniques on the scene. The Iraqi commandos, with all their equipment and provisions and experience of military courses, are miserable and helpless in the face of the faithful and brave Basijis. As a result of the shower of bullets by the forces of Islam, many bodies of the attack groups fall to the ground in front of the embankment. Our forces are so in command of the situation that they strike at any movement of the infantry personnel.

Hours of fighting ensue, and little time remains until sunrise. Seeing the resistance of the combatants and the increase in the volume of fire of our artillery, the Iraqi forces decide to retreat. They are caught in a predicament with our forces. Even if they flee, our guns fire upon them and they fall to the ground. At this moment, the enemy forces are completely defeated, and everyone is looking for a way to escape. Inside the secondary streams and small creeks of the date palm grove, individuals are crawling on all fours out of the range of the fire of the combatants of Islam. Some, appearing distraught and confused, have stopped, stunned, in the muddy streams and are overcome by fear. Some are running backward on the flat land in front of the embankments in various conditions. The wounded and nonwounded are desperately trying to get away from our embankment. The commander of our line reports on the fighting via radio as follows: "Our machine-gun barrels are cracking. All the enemy forces are shot in the back as they try to escape to the rear. The guys have brought this misery upon them, as if they have thought of them as toys."

Finally, the enemy, leaving behind a large number of dead and wounded and significant casualties, and after failing to break the defense line and penetrating the occupied area, is forced to escape and accepts a miserable retreat. The counterattack forces abandon the dead and some of the wounded in the space between our defense line and that of the enemy.

Fighting the Republican Guards

On the al-Behar road, after going through the attacks of the previous day, repelling the enemy diversionary tactics, and engaging in the essential support activities and security of the defense line and completion of the embankments last night, now, at 0700, the combatants of Islam are about to witness another counterattack by the fresh forces of the enemy and the Iraqi Republican Guards.

Ammunition, resources, and light and heavy military equipment have been positioned along our entire embankment. Especially in the area known as Konj, the forces are fully prepared. (Footnote 8) (As was said, 12 km from the Faw-al-Bejar road and at the farthest point of the right side of the operational zone, the defense lines of the combatants end in a point and that, due to the right angular crossing of the gravel road and the asphalt road and creating an important angle, this area is called the Konj. Possession of this sensitive area will result in complete domination of the battle zone.) In keeping their 'Ashura-like covenant, they display scenes of heroism and resistance. Among the combatants, the Basijis on their way to Karbala, a larger number of whom have been sent recently to the front, are especially enthusiastic and are counting the moments to take part in the operations and share in the destruction of the enemy.

Once again, enemy airplanes appear in the sky of the area and engage in blind bombing. At 0730, the enemy forces begin to attack the line. On the narrow al-Behar road, a tightly packed column of tanks, personnel carriers, and military vehicles starts moving. The tanks in front of the column target our embankment and initial fire is also carried out around the embankment. A number of tanks, due to the congestion on the road and the necessity for expansive movement, move to the left and right edges of the road and speed up towards "Konj," where the Iraqi Republican Guard in significant numbers come close in line sheltered by the tanks. The muddy ground prevents the tanks from moving and maneuvering appropriately and puts the enemy forces in a bind. Each of the Republican Guard personnel is laden with full equipment and, with backpacks containing 30-gauge cartridges and grenades, is approaching the "Konj" with difficulty and a great deal of effort. Here, the RPG missiles, grenades, and machine-gun fire of the brothers greet them. In the space between the two asphalt roads of al-Behar and Basra and in front of our embankment, a number of enemy tanks succeed in occupying a number of prefabricated bunkers. Hence, at this moment, our ground battle with the tanks becomes more serious. The organized and resistant Basiji forces, without the slightest sign of weakness, are tightly stuck to the ground and do not fail to fire for a moment. This fight continues, and the brave resistance ends paying the price of the martyrdom of a number of the children of Islam. On the other hand, a large number of the enemy is also killed and scattered on the ground.

Some of the bold Republican Guards also are taken prisoner near the line. One of the prisoners, with an ugly face, blood pouring from his lips, has two cartridges on his chest; having no life left in him, he is moved to the rear of the line. The Islamic forces take him patiently to the battalion commander. He pretends to be from one of the families of the murdered Iraqis and pretends that his watch that has Saddam's picture on it was given to him as a gift. This prisoner unconsciously expresses interest in the tomb of his holiness Abolfazl, which is in Iran (!) and also the corrupt well-known Iranian singers before the revolution. (!) After giving information about the situation of the counterattack unit, including the important casualties suffered by the Republic Guards, he is transferred across the Arvand to the rear.

At this time, the severity of fighting has increased on the line and the infantry personnel of the enemy try to get close to take over our embankment sheltered by the T-72 tanks. The RPG shooters, despite the fact that their missiles do not work on the T-72 tanks, immediately shoot another missile at them and see a number of them on fire.

At the height of the battle, at about 0900, two friendly helicopters appear on the scene and are welcomed with the cries of "God is great" by the combatants. Their timely presence refreshes the tired but hopeful souls of the forces. The al-Behar asphalt road is showered with rockets in an instant, and the Iraqi forces, even those who are away from the battle zone and watching the scene from the command and support trenches, are not safe from the terrifying fire of the Cobras. The helicopter pilots appear bravely over the heads of the enemy and, in skilled maneuvers, target the tanks and artillery of the enemy.

At about 0930, the enemy radio announcement of the enemy forces fighting on the line to the higher levels is heard: "The tanks cannot move in the desert. The ground is not firm enough for the tanks to maneuver."

Also, at this time, in order to encourage and guide his favorites (the Republican Guards), Saddam has supposedly come to the area! From the west of the city of Basra, 150 kilometers from the front, he shouts over the radio: "Advance. Shoot. Everyone, shoot."

Knowing the situation well, he has seen that the destruction of the Republican Guards is near and with force and terror tries to preserve the morale of the guards. But the combatants of Islam, every time with their strong defense, repel the enemy attack and kill a number of them in front of the embankments.

Finally, with the unsuccessful attempts of the enemy tanks at rapid maneuvers and their decisive errors, as some are struck in the mud and a number of them are set on fire by the RPG shooters and helicopters, leaving behind a number of bodies of the Guard officers, the tanks leave the scene.

After four hours of heavy fighting, the evening allows the retreat of a major part of the forces. Until sunset, they do not engage in any other action but for diversionary tactics and air strikes.

Chemical Bombing

In addition to the axes mentioned (the bank and al-Behar road axes), the enemy is also preparing itself on the Basra road axis for another counterattack, preparing all its weapons to impose another pressure from this axis to break our line and move closer to the city of Faw.

In addition, the enemy planes, since the morning of that day, are more active than they have been in previous days and drop chemical bombs in some areas. One chemical bombing occurs at 1000 in an area where the members of the Republican Guard are gathered and are preparing for a counterattack from the Basra road axis. This mistake results in casualties for the Guards regiment, most of whom are contaminated with chemicals and immediately move to the rear. Simultaneously, at the two axes of the al-Behar and Basra roads, using the artillery fire and the front line fire, the combatants of Islam prevent any enemy movement and place heavy pressure on the newly arrived enemy forces.

Also, on this day, the commander of the 111th Brigade and operational and intelligence officials are taken prisoner and moved to the rear. Moreover, in the continuation of the search by the combatants of Islam and after the enemy escapes into the date palm grove, other individuals are killed or taken prisoner by our forces. In the final hours of the day, the number of prisoners exceeds 1,500. Among them are a large number suffering from chemical injuries. On the third day of the operation, the enemy planes again engage in severe chemical bombing of the city of Faw.

The Fourth Night

Continuation of Our Attack and Vast Destruction of the Enemy

Considering the enemy defeats, one after another, on the two al-Behar and Basra road axes and the deadly blow inflicted on the enemy on one side of the Basra road, still the units of the disintegrated Iraqi Republican guard and also the other newly arrived enemy units on this axis located at the intersection in the road southeast of the salt plant are settled in a scattered manner and spend the night in order to continue counterattacks in the morning of the following day.

On the left and the right of the Basra road, and also half of the southeast side of the salt plant, the enemy forces have taken position. These forces in particular are more concentrated in two or three positions on the left of the road, which had been previously used by the support and command posts of the enemy.

The enemy tanks, equipped with strong floodlights, are standing alongside and at the side of the road, and under their shelter the infantry enemy forces are mostly resting from the harsh battles of the day. Of these forces, only a small number are awake and are keeping normal watch.

To take advantage of this situation, despite the extreme exhaustion and long sleeplessness during the previous night and day, in order to destroy and suppress the counterattack elements that continue to hope to return to the city of Faw, the commanders prepare the plan of attack. On three sides, the combatants of Islam are ready at 2100 to attack the enemy.

For this purpose, on the two sides of the strategic Faw-Basra road on the north and east and also on the south, from behind the enemy alongside the gravel road ending in the Basra road, certain axes are determined.

The Ruhollah Regiment from the side of the gravel road, the 14 Ma'sums' Regiment and Imam Hoseyn Regiment from the left and east, and the Hazrat-e Abolfazl Regiment from the north and right of the Basra road are organized to advance to the juncture of the gravel road and the asphalt road (known as the three-way intersection). There is no sign of heavy enemy artillery fire and the usual noise in the area has decreased relatively. At times a flare is shot in the air by the enemy and after lighting up an area gradually is extinguished.

On the other axes, alongside our entire defense lines, the engineering and support forces are carrying out their duties completing and fortifying the defensive strongholds.

The drivers of loaders and bulldozers, removed the small cabins of the engineering equipment in order to avoid being targets of enemy tracer bullets, continue to work constantly to take utmost advantage of the night. Across from them, the tanks with floodlights engage in circling and maneuvers, and sometimes when equipment is under their light, a shot hits the ground around the brothers.

But in this situation, even more than the previous nights, a large number of loaders and bulldozers are active. Hence, on all axes a high and dynamic level of joy and morale is witnessed among the combatants, and the darkness of the night and three days and nights of continuous effort has had no effect on the movement of the forces and their active participation in the operation.

Description of Operations on the Axis to the Left of the Road

The commander of the Ruhollah Regiment says about his maneuver plan:

"Maneuvers are arranged for two companies, and there is also a reserve company. One company is assigned to destroy two enemy command posts on the right of the gravel road, to go straight 300 meters on the gravel road and attack the enemy from behind. Another company is assigned to clear the left side of the gravel road and a portion of the asphalt road."

In this manner, the Ruhollah Regiment forces move toward the target (the three-way intersection). Simultaneously, the 14 Ma'sums' and Imam Hoseyn Regiments also cross our embankment and move toward the concentration of enemy forces near the three-way intersection. The 14 Ma'sums' Regiment, after walking 1 km, continues in a column expanding in three directions to start the fighting.

The commander of the Imam Hoseyn Regiment describes the situation of his regiment at this juncture as follows:

"With the guidance of two brothers, we walked about 1 km (because our point of reference was the oil pipe and we did not find it). Here I walked about another kilometer farther with the company commanders and, using the floodlights of the enemy tanks, found the road. We only knew that before us were three tanks and two positions forming a command post along with a large number of infantry forces. When we went back to the forces, some were asleep, having become tired after three days of fighting. We woke them up and started. In a predetermined formation, the first company in the middle, the third company on the right, and the second company on the left, we moved towards the three-way intersection of the salt plant. After 2,400 paces, one of the company commanders informed me that they have reached the oil pipeline (the main point of reference)."

At 2200, the 14 Ma'sums Regiment is engaged in battle with the enemy on the left side of the Basra road, and right on this axis the enemy machine guns, which are scattered in large numbers a short distance from the ground, become active. Lighting their strong floodlights, the enemy tanks begin their maneuver. On this axis, a large number of enemy flares are shot into the sky, and the area is lit up again and again. A moment later, small Iraqi planes (PC-7) appear over the area and also shoot flares, which have a longer range and last longer. In this situation, the axis on the left of the Basra road is quite lit up, and when the other regiments (Hazrat-e Abolfazl, Imam Hoseyn, and Ruhollah) continue on their way unmindful and advance as much as possible to take the enemy by surprise, this regiment (14 Ma'sums) is confronted by heavy enemy fire. Some time into the battle, the diversionary tactic groups of the forces of this regiment attack from left and right and after inflicting blows on enemy return to the regiment.

Seeing the superior readiness of the enemy at this point, they suggest stopping the movement of the regiment, and the forces are obliged to be grounded temporarily.

The Imam Hoseyn Regiment, which is at a closer range from the 14 Ma'sums' Regiment, without any hasty reaction, is still determined to continue advancing and taking the enemy by surprise.

The commander of the Imam Hoseyn Regiment says about the continuation of the effort:

"The first company passed the pipeline and went forward. When the second company wanted to pass, the enemy fire started and the floodlights of the tanks were lit. Shooting had escalated, but we did not know whether or not the enemy had seen us. From there we continued by crawling. Our range was a little far and to shoot would be of no use. The guys had to crawl for about a kilometer. Finally, despite the enemy fire, the guys dragged themselves forward. We were in this area when the enemy used chemicals as well. Most of the guys were about to be contaminated. Finally, despite the enemy fire, the guys dragged themselves forward. I did not allow them to use masks because that would compromise their combat readiness. On the other hand, I told the brothers to get close to the tanks so that we would save ourselves from the chemicals by setting them on fire. At 1000, the battle started with the hitting of nine tanks. With the tanks burning, the guys got up and seriously engaged the enemy."

The start of the attack by this regiment occurs when the enemy forces are all busy fighting the 14 Ma'sums' Regiment and most of their attention is concentrated on this axis.

A moment later, while the fighting continues at an escalated pace and the enemy has found that it is facing a larger number of forces, the Ruhollah Regiment, which has continued to attack from the south, despite enemy expectations, observing utmost silence and using surprise tactics, reaches the area of battle with difficulty. This regiment has infiltrated so deep into enemy territory that it has easily and without casualties passed a large section of the gravel road and comes close to its main objective, which is the two enemy command posts on the right of the gravel road. In the shortest amount of time, with the attack of the regiment forces, these two command posts are under siege and occupied, and their personnel are killed. Finally, while fighting continues on the south of the gravel road from the sides of the 14 Ma'sums' and Imam Hoseyn Regiments, the Ruhollah Regiment succeeds in taking over all enemy positions and takes full control of the gravel road, without the knowledge of the enemy forces under siege, close to their rear.

At 0100, the combatants of the Imam Hoseyn Regiment, who have succeeded in harnessing the chemical bullets somewhat and have rendered them less effective by setting the tanks on fire, continue to destroy enemy positions and advance toward the three-way intersection, which is more than 2 km away. Since so far the 14 Ma'sums' Regiment has not succeed in eliminating the existing problems on its path, and heavy fire is exchanged on the axis of this regiment, the Imam Hoseyn Regiment, in order to circle and put under siege the existing enemy forces on the left of the Basra road, moves some of its forces a little to the right instead of advancing toward the three-way intersection to reach the asphalt road and complete the siege, and another part continues in the direction of the main target.

This regiment announces at 2345 that it has destroyed the enemy forces and has reached the asphalt road.

At this time, the efforts of the 14 Ma'sums' and Imam Hoseyn Regiments are spent on consolidating and destroying the existing enemy between them. Thus, fighting on that axis continues for a few minutes. With the exception of the axis on which it seems that the enemy has a more expansive formation and requires a longer period of time for mop-up operations, operations on all other axes are progressing desirably. Around the three-way intersection of the gravel road and the Basra road, regiments are getting closer to one another every minute, and more enemy forces under siege by the combatants of Islam are killed.

On the side of the asphalt road, our forces have come so close to each other that there is the possibility of shooting at one another. In order to prevent such an accident, the commanders try quickly to make sure of the presence of friendly forces through more careful identification. With the hard work and perseverance of the commanders, the important action of consolidating the regiments at the fork in the road is carried out without casualties.

About this case, the commander of the Imam Hoseyn Regiment says:

"First, I informed the regimental commander that there is a series of forces in front of us who are about to shoot at us. Are they enemy or friendly forces? The regiment established its position and the decision was made that they would shoot a flare for us to identify them. When the flare was shot, we saw it appear above our heads. I told the guys that they are our own forces and not to shoot. They guys of the Abolfazl Regiment were on the other side of the road, and we were on this side."

In this manner, a signal is also given by the Ruhollah Regiment. This regiment also joins with other forces, and at this moment, engineering activities begin and the building of the embankment starts.

Because of the existence of a strong command post 2 or 3 km to the south of the gravel road, which has blockades and embankments, the enemy forces continue to hold up in front of the 14 Ma'sums' Regiment and have not yet been destroyed. Pressure by the forces of the above-mentioned two regiments increases continuously from up and down. The enemy investment in terms of preparatory and combat support fire on this point verifies that among the mass of enemy forces under siege, there are also guard army elements and high-ranking military commanders. In order to protect the remaining favorites, they do not stop at any effort. Even at this time it is reported that the enemy is reinforcing its armored forces by trailers via the Basra road. When the members of the Ruhollah Regiment positioned at the southeast side of the salt plant and the three-way intersection see them and see the support and infantry forces of Iraq on the

Basra road, which together form a column on the eastern side of the plant, they direct a large volume of fire towards the above-mentioned column. In this way, not only is the road totally closed to the prisoners and support of the enemy forces under siege, but also with the surprise reaction of the Ruhollah Regiment and its timely fire, the enemy suffers significant losses.

In any case, the enemy forces under siege, because they do not know they are under siege and also because they are using the existing positions and ammunition in the command post, continue to resist and every moment suffer heavy casualties and damage. Hence, our forces consider their destruction final and engage in more essential tasks, including completion of the consolidation of the regiments.

Description of Operations on the Axis to the Right of the Road

In order to more thoroughly destroy the enemy, the strong and powerful Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment, which has a brave and fearless commander, has been assigned to this axis. The commander is a mature and experienced man who has shown extreme competence in prior operations. After a brief examination from the watch tower, the regimental commander only explains: "Objective, 3,000 paces ahead of our embankment; description, the buildup of enemy troops around the intersection."

This much explanation, considering the scattered nature and lack of clear orders of the enemy lines, seems natural. Understanding the issue and aware of his grave assignment, he eagerly engages in this responsibility.

In the dark of the night and in front of the regimental commander, the personnel, with a clear azimuth and the guidance of the deputy regimental commander, are moved at 2130 from the release point and our embankment toward the objective.

The company commanders are in the midst of the column and only listen via radio to the directions of Brother Hasan, the regimental commander. Half an hour passes since the regiment began to move. The hour of the beginning of the overall attack has arrived. After a report from Brother Hasan is sent stating that they have come close to the target, Brother Kharrazi, the commander of the division, from this moment on anxiously points out that they must get ready as soon as possible for the regiment to start.

Brother Hoseyn (commander): "Dear Hasan, (our forces) are coming from the left as well. Be careful to keep out of trouble. You should not spread out."

Other regiments start the operations on the left of the road. From a distance, the sound of shots and machinegun fire can be heard, and tracer bullet exchange can be seen. The regiment members, with the good directions of Brother Hasan, continue on the road in an orderly column. Not long after the start of fighting on the axis to the left of the road, the enemy forces positioned in front of this regiment become sensitive and begin to shoot flares and turn on tank floodlights. The division commander, much more worried than before, calls the regimental commander over the radio:

Commander: Hasan, Hasan. Come in. Hoseyn calling.

Brother Hasan: (quietly) I read you, loud and clear.

Commander: Start your work, firmly. Do not wait. Get going.

Despite the concern of the division commander, the members of the Abolfazl Regiment, with the interesting initiative of its commander, advance as much as possible towards the target. With the radio in his hand, every time a flare is lit, he orders all his personnel to hit the ground. In one moment, the whole regiment is hidden on the flat land among the holes in the ground. Only the regimental commander keeps his head up to his chest and, making use of the flare light and also the enemy tank floodlights, marks the area. The tank floodlights reveal the enemy bunkers and positions as they turn.

In one moment, a floodlight lights up above the heads of the regiment. Everyone hits the ground and the light of the floodlight slowly passes over the heads of the brothers. By regularly shooting flares, the enemy forces are guiding the Islamic forces closer to the target. A minute later, with the flares going off, all the combatants call each other upon the instruction of the regimental commander and after rising from the ground, continue forward. After some walking, again a number of flares are shot into the sky and light up the area. Subsequently, the regimental commander informs the division commander over the radio and the combatants immediately hit the ground. Every time, repeating the above order, he identifies the enemy from a closer position. In this connection, he says:

"When we came near the enemy, with the lighting of enemy flares and tank floodlights, we identified their positions and areas of concentration and, in this manner, penetrated through the clear areas and from among them. We assigned a group of the regiment forces for every place of the concentration of the enemy who were resting without trenches in the shelter of tanks."

At 2300, the members of the regiment from three directions, without attracting any attention from the enemy, infiltrate their personnel and tanks, but the combatants are not given permission to start the fighting upon the emphatic directions of the regimental commander.

At this moment, when our forces have come very close to the location and positions of the enemy and the regimental commander with his unmatched patience assigns every group of the regiment to one area, the division commander asks for an explanation as to why the fighting has not started and insists constantly:

Commander: "Do not go so close. Where do you think you are going? Try to start sooner."

Regiment Commander (Brother Hasan, very quietly): "Well, we will wait a few more minutes, to get closer."

Commander: "Fine! But also think about consolidating with the other forces. Start more quickly."

The regimental commander lowers his voice over the radio, because at this time (2315) he is a few steps from the division and directs the regiment groups to this direction and that. He uses the space between the enemy and, by arranging the individual and groups in an orderly way, moves forward as much as possible. He tells every group: "Your assignment is only this section. And be quiet until the firing begins. When the firing starts, you start, too."

Inside the division command bunker at this moment, there is such excitement that Brother Hoseyn Kharrazi has asked those present to recite the "Ayat ol-Korsi" [verse from the Koran] and salutations for the health of the Imam of the Age. Again he holds the radio and calls Brother Hasan:

Commander: Hasan, Hasan, it's Hoseyn.

Brother Hasan (quietly): I read you, loud and clear.

Commander: What's the story? Have you started?

Brother Hasan (quietly and panting): We are close to the three-way intersection. The guys have surrounded the enemy. When it is appropriate, we will start fighting.

Commander: Try, by the grace of God, to deal with them firmly. We all rely on God. In the same way that God has helped us so far, here, too, he will certainly help us. Their (enemy's) problem will be solved in the shortest possible time.

Finally, after the frequent emphasis of Brother Kharrazi, the division commander, since fierce fighting continues to the left of the Basra road, the commander of the Abolfazl Regiment in front of everyone starts the fighting deep in the enemy territory. Suddenly, on the right of the road, fighting also begins. Our artillery uses all its might to fire at the rear lines of the enemy. In a short distance, the flames of friendly fire rise to the sky and the listening post reports: "One of the commanders of the Ba'thist enemy has been killed, and the enemy has announced that Iranian forces have reached the asphalt road."

Hence, now the flames of fire light up the area, and there are no longer any enemy flares. The commander of the Abolfalz Regiment, in order to see better and destroy the enemy as best he can, requests of the division commander that flares be shot. And from this moment, contrary to earlier, he speaks loudly, gleefully, and clearly over the radio:

Brother Hasan: "All of them are on fire. And we are firing on the rest."

At 2330, it is reported from the line to the commander that our forces have succeeded in destroying *10* tanks. Again, the regimental commander comes on the ratio and in a loud and excited voice says:

Brother Hasan: "Thank God, the ruckus has started; they went up in the air."

Every group of the regiment has put the scattered enemy gatherings under siege and is firing at all the personnel. Every group in a semicircle formed with their backs to one another opens fire on the enemy in front of them and has incredibly taken many of the enemy forces, sleeping and awake, by surprise and destroyed them. The artillery fire continues to rain the heads of the forces more to the rear, and hence the enemy is prevented from coming out of the bunkers and helping the guards. As time goes by, pressure on them increases. The Basiji combatants, who have not left anyone unharmed, start collecting full cartridges and spoils and, using the existing ammunition, chase the enemy and advance beyond the target (beyond than the three-way intersection). Even though it seems, after walking 3 km and very brave operations, that it would be better for the regiment to stop; the forces, despite extreme exhaustion, continue to fight and only think about bullets and loading cartridges. With their capable hands, they have brought misery to many of the Iraqi Republican Guards and are seeing with their own eyes the abjectness of the enemy and the victory of the Islamic forces. For this reason, they do not take their fingers off the triggers for a moment.

A little beyond the three-way intersection, the fighting gradually escalates. At about 0100, our listening post reports on the enemy radio conversation that they are under siege and asking emphatically for forces. But they are told: "We cannot send help." After the enemy has been eradicated from the three-way intersection, due to the simultaneous help of the Ruhollah Regiment, the Abolfazl Regiment starts creating strongholds and consolidating with other friendly regiments.

A number of the forces of the victorious and successful Abolfazl Regiment, after returning to the road, describe the operation as unmatched and indescribable. All say: "We dare say that not one shot of the machine-gun bullets missed; they all hit the guards."

Another regiment official who was present on the line expresses his observations as follows: "Our guys made mounds of the dead. Last night's operation was unprecedented in our war with Iraq; we have taken our revenge of several years from the guards division."

A number of other personnel of the Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment describes the operation as follows:

"We showered so many shots on the enemy that we got tired. We even used their cartridges and had infiltrated them so much that they were taken by surprise and lost their confidence and became unsteady. They did not know in which direction to escape. They did not even know in which direction to shoot."

Finally, after three or four hours of heavy fighting, this regiment, with the very interesting and brave initiative of its commander and the powerful attack of the Basijis, was able to destroy the enemy force, considered one of the strongest forces of the Iraqi army, with minimal casualties. Based on information obtained, and also the statements of the guard prisoners, these forces took aggressive positions in the field and in the shelter of tanks, with two infantry brigades and one armored brigade, and, because of their neglect in creating defensive strongholds and even undertaking ambushes or laying mine fields, their destruction ensued.

Hence, these forces, despite their superior resources, equipment, and military power, are the target of the creativity of a faithful, brave, and heroic regimental commander, who although lacking sufficient information about the enemy prior to the operation, on the scene of the operation, finds the opportunity to make all the necessary military calculations.

Hence, in the course of one night, a land under enemy forces comes under siege. Now, it is the morning of the fourth day.

The Fourth Day

Continuation of Enemy Pressure and Resistance of Our Forces

The artillery fire and air attacks by the enemy increases on all operational axes and defense lines, as well as around and inside the city of Faw and at our rear, compared to previous days. The traffic, formations, and reinforcing of the units of the Iraqi army indicate that they are preparing themselves for a more massive counterattack.

On the axis of the al-Behar road, once it is quite light, the readiness of the enemy for a counterattack attracts the attention of the brothers present on the front line, and for this reason, with the emphasis of the commanders, the support and security affairs on the line in terms of arms and ammunition are carried out more rapidly. On the other hand, at the axis of the Arvand perimeter and inside the date palm grove as well, the movements of the enemy appear greater even than on the al-Behar road, and this axis is strengthened, especially in terms of manpower, weapons, and ammunition. One or two hours after sunrise, when the fog lifts over the Arvand perimeter, the enemy forces engage in a counterattack with reinforces support and more armored capability.

Our defensive forces on the axis of the date palm grove, who had gone to confront the Iraqi commandos yesterday, face a commando force of the enemy today as well, one that is trying again with small- and large-weapon fire support to gain access to our embankment. The combatants of Islam continue resistance with confidence and disregard the apparent power of the Iraqi commandos, despite the artillery fire and the direct shots of enemy tanks. Our forces behind the embankment exchange fire with the counterattack forces among the scattered date palm trees and secondary streams inside the date palm grove.

The Islamic forces, in a united way, create a dam of fire in front of the embankment and do not leave the embankment for a moment. Every time the enemy personnel attack collectively toward the embankment, they fall to the ground, and each subsequent group meets the same fate. Finally, after several hours of battle, the counterattack forces retreat with heavy casualties and abandoned dead.

On the Axis of the al-Behar Road

Simultaneously, on the axis of the al-Behar road, as well, the enemy, with a column of tanks and personnel carriers and a large number of special forces, attack the tip of our defense line (known as Konj). The battle continues for two to three hours, more severely than in the past few days, and at about 1100, with the approach of a number of tanks and infantry toward our embankment, it escalates even more. Around Konj, our forces continue fighting enemy forces within a short range of each other.

Temporarily, for a few minutes, our first line at the Konj is evacuated and groups of RPG shooters, who are in the embankments behind the Konj, aim at the enemy personnel and tanks.

At 1130, all regiments report they have consolidated. The newly arrived combatants are positioned behind our first line, and the enemy, most exhausted and horrified, makes an effort. At noon on this day, our personnel have regained their previous order and formation behind the embankment, and a more than sufficient number of personnel stand in defense while the enemy, suffering heavy casualties and despair because of the superiority of our forces, and leaving a large number of destroyed tanks and many dead people, retreats. Hence, one of the strongest enemy counterattacks on this axis is neutralized.

On the Axis of the Basra Road

Continuing the efforts of the previous night, at sunrise efforts to stabilize the three-way intersection south of the salt plant begin from every direction. At 0600, the Ruhollah Regiment from the side of the gravel road, and the Imam Hoseyn and Hazrat 'Ali Akbar Regiment, which has just entered the area, fully consolidating in order to achieve the above objective, place more pressure on the mass of enemy forces under siege. With daybreak, it becomes clear that most of those under siege are members of the Iraqi Republican Guards, who continue to have significant armored weapon reserves.

Simultaneous with the start of the activities of the combatants of Islam to clear out the guards who are behind our line, with powerful armored and infantry support, the enemy engages in a severe counterattack down the asphalt road towards the three-way intersection.

At this time, our defense formation around the three-way intersection is appropriate to destroy as much of the enemy as possible and the ground in the area and the angles of vision are conducive to the combatants' plan of action.

On the other hand, the enemy forces under siege gradually gain strength and have become aware of the situation of the area and disturb our defenders from the rear. Certain of death or being taken prisoner and also seeing the actions of the counterattack elements, which are putting pressure on the three-way intersection, some continue resistance and others surrender as soon as the mop-up operations by the combatants of Islam begins.

At the time, many of the officials and commanders of the units are present at the three-way intersection and on the front lines of the battle, and each mobilizes the antiarmored and heavy weapon resources up to the line. The RPG shooters, the vehicles carrying 106-caliber guns, and the missiles, row by row behind the embankment and natural strongholds of the area, begin to fire. On the axis of the Ruhollah Regiment and the extension of the gravel road, the combatants of Islam aim at the enemy tanks on the asphalt road.

The long column created behind the enemy tanks is not protected from the shower of Basiji bullets. Their heavy fire on the asphalt road and also our vast artillery fire around the road halt the enemy armored and infantry movement before the three-way intersection. In one moment, the fire of destroyed tanks and military vehicles of the enemy flames up to the sky.

Every few minutes another tank or vehicle is destroyed, and the cabins of destroyed tanks separate from the bodies of the tanks and are tossed into the air. Two or three hours into the fighting, there is a mass of burnt enemy transport and armored equipment close to the asphalt road, 500 meters to 1 km from the three-way intersection. The creation of a large fissure a little before the three-way intersection by the combatants of the Abolfazl Regiment increases the maneuverability problems of the tanks that sometimes speedily attack the line. In the vast plain surrounding the road, the enemy forces engage in scattered attacks against the defense lines around the three-way intersection.

Now the trained motorcyclists, in place of the special pickup trucks for ammunition transport, which have not been able to function due to the unsuitability of the road, rapidly provide the necessities of the front line. On the axis of the Basra Road, simultaneously, the Hazrat 'Ali Akbar and Hazrat Imam Hoseyn Regiments are engaged in a harsh battle with the enemy on three fronts. Part of the forces are trying to neutralize the actions of those under siege and, using the existing embankments around a large command post, continue resistance. Another part responds to the attacks of the enemy along the asphalt road and the right side of the road. The more the pressure on the enemy forces increases to break the line, the more our artillery fire concentrates on the head of the enemy in an unprecedented manner. With the horrible shower of bullets in the area, a number of enemy forces who find themselves incapable of escaping and with their ammunition about finished, surrender group by group to the combatants of Islam. With the entry of a number of our tanks on the scene of operation and their firing on the enemy command post, others are forced to surrender.

A moment later, while our forces on the defense line of the three-way intersection continue to counter the enemy counterattack and the combatants all have their eyes on the asphalt road and its surroundings and the exchange of fire by both sides continues, suddenly from two sides, behind the gravel road and behind our defense forces on the three-way intersection, shots are fired toward our line by light and heavy enemy weapons. The forces, whose main attention is concentrated on the front of the embankment, are terribly threatened from behind. At the beginning, it is thought that a mistake has been made by friendly forces. But after a while it becomes clear that a number of the remaining enemy under siege, making use of a few tanks in the command post, have attacked the Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment positioned at the three-way intersection from behind and are shooting at the Ruhollah Regiment positioned behind the gravel road.

Our forces fire at them from every direction, killing a large number of them, and a small number successfully escape, because at this time, due to the duration of the fighting against the counter-attackers, the ammunition of our forces has decreased, and these troops have taken advantage of the opportunity to escape the siege of our forces.

At this time, the enemy artillery also increases, and most of the shots containing chemicals fill the area of battle. These shots accidentally fall in an area of the fighting that contains mostly enemy forces, and the harm comes to them.

On the other hand, this action by the enemy shows its absolute despair regarding the desertion of its forces under siege, which so far, safe from such actions, have only had the fire of the combatants of Islam to contend with.

Despite all this, despite solving the major problems our forces have presented, only a small number of personnel remain in the area under siege in a scattered, confused manner to either surrender or make an effort to escape.

Up to this moment, because of the heavy casualties that it has sustained on the road at the side of the Ruhollah Regiment (left of the Basra road), even with the level of pressure imposed on this side, it gradually expands and advances between the two al-Behar and Basra roads, and even though a number of its tanks are stuck in the mud and can only move very slowly, in any way possible it continues on toward our defense line (between the first and second roads). Hence, as time passes, the enemy gradually comes closer to the right edge of the three-way intersection and the Basra road and threatens the rear of the Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment that is engaged in defending this area.

At 1400, after a short period of calm, simultaneous with the strong enemy artillery fire, the continuation of counterattacks on the plain to the right of the Basra road to take possession of the three-way intersection and the command posts on the edge of the gravel road suddenly starts. The enemy forces, with more potential supported by initial fire and chemical artillery shots, engage in this counterattack to take possession of the asphalt road behind the combatants and advance toward our line from the front, so that subsequently they can put the Hazrat Abolfazl Regime under siege.

But the members of the Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment very firmly continue resistance against the initial fire and attack of tanks and infantry forces of the enemy. The commander of the Hazrat Abolfazl Regiment, along with 'Ali Quchani, the commander of one of the brigades of the 14th Division of Imam Hoseyn and the commander of the current operations, informs the officials over the radio of the presence of the enemy to the right of the Basra road and requests help. Members of other regiments have each been actively fighting and a number of them have been contaminated by chemicals. Now, on the faces of each, the signs of severe exhaustion are evident. And, considering the volume and severity of the fighting over the past few hours, the existing ammunition is not sufficient to counter a massive enemy attack. Hence, the regimental commander, who has so far been responding to the fierce enemy counterattack, out of necessity suggests retreat. After getting the approval of higher commanders, intending to put up a defense, he establishes the regiment 1 km farther back from the three-way intersection. At this juncture, as well, the scene of the operation is full of heroism and self-sacrifice. Brother Quchani, who has been present since this morning on the front line alongside the resistant forces of the Abolfazl Regiment and has been helping the regimental commander in various affairs, now in the retreat of the regiment as well, consistently plays an active role. He specifies a position a little farther back and, with the full knowledge of the regimental commander, controls, and guides the movement of the forces. On this path, he is so active, that it seems as if he has pledged that, since up to this moment he has been a partner in the harsh and heavy resistance conditions of the Basijis, at this juncture of the operations, too, he will return after the departure of the last person.

In front of everyone, he goes to this side and that and does not stop for a moment. He inspects our positions from trench to trench and works hard after the last persons in the regiment. But to be sure of the departure of all the Basijis in his line, under the strong enemy fire that has escalated at this hour, he continues his search. Running around a great deal and shouting, he calls the possible remaining combatants. With the decreased ability of our forces to engage in close fire, the enemy forces come closer to the three-way intersection at every moment. But 'Ali Quchani is busy with his grave responsibility, and in a spirit of concern for the Basijis and indescribable consideration, he continues to monitor the area. Simultaneous with the completion of the retreat of the regiment, he also prepares himself to join the forces. But he is not yet at a distance from the line when enemy tanks become aware of his presence and aim at him as the last person. Our forces, which witness the scene from a distance, at one moment see 'Ali Quchani, like a flame of fire that disappears rapidly. In an examination made later, no sign of him is found, and he who had a deep friendship with and emotional and unbreakable tie to the Basijis finally sacrifices his life on the path of love and loyalty, responding positively to the Imam's call, and leaves behind only a fistful of dust as a memento for his family.

In any case, the "fourth day of operation" ends when the enemy, despite heavy casualties and the destruction of another section of its Republican Guard, regularly sends fresh mechanized, armed, and infantry units to the Basra axis, and with the help of air bombing and launching rockets and chemical shots, places severe presence on our forces, which are far fewer than the enemy and who have engaged in resistance for a long time with negligible resources. Finally, the combatants temporarily take charge of the three-way intersection and come close to our defense lines, which are located about 1 km south of the salt plant alongside and on the left of the Basra road.

On the axis of the Om ol-Qasr road, as well, since early morning, the enemy counterattacks began along the road. The artillery fire of Iraq on this axis has increased compared to the previous days and in addition, PC-7 airplanes and every helicopter are prepared for reconnaissance and support of the counterattacks. The forces of "Habib ebn Mazaher" Regiment, while breaking part of the road, put up resistance at the side of the road and on it. In the initial enemy attack, which is alternately carried out by personnel carriers and tanks, our forces succeed in destroying a number of tanks, which create another obstacle on the enemy path. Seeing the start of the enemy counterattack on this axis, support and provisional activities that have been very week so far escalate. In addition to the engineering equipment and provisions officials, some of the regiment forces also volunteer to perform this task. After an hour of fighting, at 0930, the first arms cargo crosses the Arvand River and is transported to the line.

Even though weapons such as mortars, 10-mm, 81-mm, 106-mm, and 107-mm guns and Malyutka are effective in the rapid repelling of the enemy counterattack, up to this hour, the combatants of the Habib ebn Mazaher Regiment put up resistance against the frequent enemy attacks with minimal resources. Due to the lack of transportation equipment or their inefficiency under enemy view, not even foodstuff and small-caliber ammunition have been placed at the disposal of the enemy, and finally only one undamaged vehicle and the bullets taken as spoils are found to help the forces on the line. Guiding the above-mentioned vehicle and the transport of ammunition and food under enemy machine-gun and mortar 60 fire [as published] on the Om ol-Qasr asphalt road, which is higher than the ground surface at this full range of fire, is itself a very important and dangerous assignment. One of the brothers volunteers and, filling the vehicle full of cargo, moves toward the line. As soon as he approaches the embankment, a shower of bullets comes toward the vehicle. But the driver, without stopping, goes through the asphalt road and reaches behind our embankment. He does this several times in full view of the enemy and on every trip supplies the first line with RPG mortars in particular. He does this so purposefully and rapidly that even on his return he takes the injured for emergency care and displays a vision of faith, bravery, and fearlessness. Finally, after several times supplying the line, he is hit by the sharpshooters of the enemy, injured in the head, and succumbs shortly thereafter. His self-sacrifice has angered the Iraqi mercenaries and caused them psychological torment, as if they had assigned a large number of personnel just to stop him and take revenge on him.

Also under the situation of increased air attacks of the enemy by airplane and helicopter and the measurable pressure that threatens our front line, the regimental commander orders the repair of the four-barrel gun, and after getting it on the front embankment, its roar indicates that the enemy helicopters are being shot at. The helicopters, which had been freely approaching the defense lines so far, seeing the antiaircraft four-barrel gun, are taken by surprise, and while fleeing the scene, one is struck and immediately crashes to the ground. Hence, the combatants of the Habib ebn Mazaher Regiment, with joyful morale, continue resistance until sufficient resources and ammunition arrive. Moments later, with the establishment of several mortars on the line and opening up direct and indirect fire on the enemy, the situation improves. And at 1040, Brother Dastvareh, the deputy commander of the regiment, who is on the front line, says in a message: "The situation is very good; the enemy is no longer capable of advancing."

Also, after the defeat of this counterattack, moment by moment, the front lines are supplied and reinforced with necessities.

At 1330, the transfer of a PMP [as published] vehicle with a cargo of ammunition and the implementation of heavy fire at the enemy strengthen the morale and revitalize our forces, and the defense line on the axis gains the strength it needs.

The Fifth Night and Day

Retaking of the Three-Way Intersection and Reinforcing a Strong Defense

After the order for tactical retreat is given to the regiments fighting on the three-way intersection on the afternoon of 24/11 [13 February], the commanders engage until this hour of the night (0200) in regular discussions about the plan to retake the three-way intersection with stronger support and organization.

This time, a plan is prepared in which after attacking the enemy and securing the objectives the main role will be played by the [Ministry of Construction] Jihad and Guard Corps engineering equipment, and they will benefit from the actions of the Basiji combatants. Building effective embankments around the three-way intersection and destroying the enemy with four regiments are specified as the main objectives of the operation. Like last night, they are to strike from the right, middle, and left of the asphalt road toward the three-way intersection. To achieve these goals, the number of loaders and bulldozers have increased compared to the previous operations, and engineering potential has increased severalfold. But, due to the superiority of our infantry forces, the potential of the regiments has not increased.

On the left axis of the asphalt road, the combatant regiments are prepared to move at about 2400 and are prepared to be released from previously determined positions. Under the situation of enemy artillery shooting at the operational area even more than the previous night, the Islamic forces of the left flank and along the gravel road ending in the Basra road separate from our embankment and after some distance come close to the enemy. This time, the commanders on the scene are more knowledgeable about the land and the position of the enemy command posts and strongholds. Facing no obstacles, at 0100 they begin mop-up operations and destroy the tired and horrified enemy forces. Within a short period of time, these forces succeed in rendezvousing near the three-way intersection and wait for the forces of other flanks to join them. At this time, on the middle axis and on the flanks to the right of the asphalt road, the forces make their way to the vicinity of the three-way intersection.

But on the right axis of the road, the Ya Zahra Regiment confronts many new obstacles.

This regiment, at about 2400, after walking for one hour, engages in battle with enemy forces as it penetrates their positions and then engages in hand-to-hand combat with enemy forces.

One company of the Ya Zahra Regiment, 15 minutes after the start of the battle, announces that it has reached the asphalt road and united with the forces of the left axis of the asphalt road.

The regimental commander emphasizes that positions resembling command posts be immediately cleared. At this time, the engineering companies have started building embankments from both sides (of the al-Behar-Basra road) and are moving to the other side.

At 0130, the official in charge of the right axis of the operations, describes the situation as follows: "The situation is very good. The guys have done a good job of killing the enemy. The three-way intersection has been cleared and the embankment is being built."

The regiments of the axes on the left and right of the road, with a 10-minute difference, pressure the enemy forces on the three-way intersection and eradicate all the existing personnel in this area. Also, the middle axis, after advancing somewhat toward the three-way intersection, make the most of their investment in building embankments from the Basra road toward the al-Behar road.

At this time, the enemy artillery has been shelling the area in an unprecedented manner, such that one of the brothers says: "It is as if Saddam has lined up his whole artillery and given every Iraqi a cannon and is forcing them to load the weapons."

Fortunately, considering the vastness of the operational area and the inability to concentrate shelling, the shelling has had no other effect but wasteful and hasty use of artillery ammunition, and our other forces, out of all probable danger, are resting inside the strongholds or spending the night anticipating the news of the results of the operation.

At 0300, when engineering groups have accomplished part of their duty, the demolition group starts to create mine fields in front of the embankment and reinforce the new defense as much as possible to confront the counterattack on the next day and destroy the enemy tanks.

Finally, with the sunrise, the operational area is totally poised, and the forces behind the embankments created, in position, and with sufficient ammunition, stand in defense.

Diversionary Tactics on the Om ol-Qasr Road Axis

In order to destroy the crowded forces of the enemy alongside the Om ol-Qasr road, as they prepare or rest for the next day's counterattack, the Hamzeh Regiment is assigned to advance on the left and right of the road and clear the canal and the bridge connected to the salt plant located 6 km from the defensive line of the Habib Regiment, at the juncture of the gravel and the asphalt roads, and, if possible, after blowing up the abovementioned bridge engage in defense near it. Also, it has been decided that the engineering unit should take advantage of the opportunity and repair and reinforce the existing embankments or build new embankments in front of the present line.

At 2100, the members of the regiment are released from the point at which many of regiment officials are now gathering.

At 2220, the regiment begins its attack from the left with one company and accompanied by heavy fire engages in mop-up operations and destruction of the enemy.

Not long after the fighting begins, when the company faces a mass of enemy PMP equipment tightly positioned on the road, much of the equipment is destroyed with the first launch of the RPG missiles of the brothers. But from here on, due to the proximity of our forces, it is not possible to shoot RPGs and personnel use hand grenades to destroy them one after another.

The enemy forces, who have mostly been caught by surprise, each escape in one direction. Some go to the right side of the road to the existing buildings for shelter and some, also intending to put up resistance, take positions at the edge of the road or under the undamaged PMP vehicles. Here, fighting continues at a very short distance and the forces hidden under the PMPs, without being able to see or move, terrified, fire in all directions. But the regiment personnel, rapidly advancing, engage in destroying the equipment and vehicles on the road.

The next company of the Hamzeh Regiment following the first company continues on the left of the road more strongly and speedily. The forces of the latter regiment are searching for escaped individuals among the PMPs and the buildings around the road and upon finding them, kill some of them and force most of them to escape.

Until this time, a large number of the enemy has been killed, and a great deal of their resources destroyed. Fighting still continues and after some time it becomes hand-to-hand combat.

After advancing 1 or 2 km, the second company also uses its ability and energy to mop up the mass of enemy forces inside the other buildings around the road, and for this reason, the third company continues the assignment of the Hamzeh Regiment.

This company, leaving the destroyed PMPs behind, comes across a number of remaining enemy on its way and, after killing them, moves forward.

The enemy, seeing the success of the combatants of Islam, start fleeing and retreat. From the right side of the road, they form on the path of three enemy tanks on the road. Immediately, the RPG shooters launch their missiles. With the destruction of these tanks, the morale of the forces doubles, and they speed up to reach the objective. Here, those who have succeeded in escaping the initial attack of the regiment have taken positions on the left side of the road. Suddenly, with the launching of grenades, our forces notice their presence. A few of the brothers are martyred and injured. To confront the enemy, the combatants stop and a grenade battle begins on both sides of the road.

As soon as the grenades are launched and the combatants of Islam on the other side of the road counter fire, one of the enemy machine guns, which had noticed our forces a little farther away, apparently fires at the brothers.

Also, a jeep is seen speeding with its lights on along the asphalt road toward our line. The combatants of the Third Company immediately think that the enemy is trying to block their rear and surround them. For this reason, they take a position on the left of the road and get ready to fire at them. As soon as they come close, the men in the jeep launch an RPG missile on the side of the road where they think the brothers are. The combatants fire with machine guns at the jeep. At this moment, one of them jumps out of the jeep and the rest die. The other one also is killed by a Basiji brother when he attacks him. This company continues to fight to the last bullet, but in the end is replaced by two groups of fresh combatants and transferred to the rear. Simultaneously, all the forces announce completion of their assignment and the order to retreat is issued. The healthy personnel evacuate the wounded and few martyrs from the area. The diversionary tactics done on this axis end in the situation of the enemy having suffered many casualties and vast damage. Along 1 or 2 km of the fighting line, a mass of the enemy dead lie on the ground and the flames of the fire of the burning personnel carriers and tanks rise to the sky. Moreover, their defense forces also find the opportunity to reinforce their defense lines and become more prepared counter the next Iraqi attacks. On the whole, the destruction of one mechanized regiment of the enemy, the destruction of 30 PMP vehicles and eight or 10 tanks, the closure of the road by the destroyed personnel carriers and tanks, and the prevention of the enemy counterattacks can be mentioned as the clear results of the operations of the fifth night.(Footnote 9) (The fact that until this time, at the end of the description of the operations of the various nights of the Faw battle, statistical results are not presented is because of the large volume of damage and casualties of the enemy for which quantitiative statistics clearly cannot be provided.)

Night Enemy Counterattack on the Axis of the Date Palm Grove

Contrary to previous days when the Iraqi forces engaged in counterattacks, this time, in the middle of the night, taking advantage of the darkness and the cover of the date palm grove, they try to occupy our embankment on the banks of the Arvand and, on their way, pave the way for the infiltration of more forces to enter the city of Faw.

One brigade of Iraqi commandos attacks the embankment and the defense line, and with the start of the battle, our forces, who now have superior readiness in terms of both numbers and ability, retaliate. The battle reaches a serious phase and continues at the edge of our embankment in hand-to-hand combat. The mobilization forces strongly resist the Iraqi mercenaries and put up united resistance along the embankment. Despite the strong pressure and fire of the enemy from far and near, the combatants all stand in front of the enemy personnel poised to protect the gains of the operation.

An hour has passed since the pounding confrontation of the combatants of Islam with the enemy elements. Now, without hope of succeeding in creating a hole in the line of our forces, with a disintegrated organization, the enemy decides to retreat and, in doing so, suffers serious casualties. With the daylight, the sight of the bodies of the enemy behind our embankment amazes everyone. This shows the level of resistance of the defenders, who even with the crossing of their line by the aggressive forces did not separate from the embankment for a moment and, unshaken, have continued resistance along the line.

Fifth Day of the Operation

Our forces take great pains to stabilize the three-way intersection south of the salt plant and repel the enemy attacks. With the presence of two regimental commanders on the front line, behind the embankment that was built last night, supplies and needed arms are sent regularly to the line. The line becomes stronger than ever before, and with the frequent and precise instructions, the defense line assumes a very good formation.

On other axes also, the Islamic forces generally are engaged in engineering and support activities. In some areas the mop-up operations in the date palm groves of the enemy escapees continues.

On the other hand, in addition to chemical bombing and shelling in various areas by the enemy, along the middle axis and the Basra strategic road alone three counterattacks have taken place at 0900, 1200 and 1500, each ending in defeat as a result of the strong resistance of the Islamic forces and the prompt fire from far and near. In these counterattacks, each of which was stronger than the previous one, the enemy has suffered heavy casualties, and another group of active Iraqi units has been destroyed.

On the Om ol-Qasr road axis, because of the obstacles on the road, no action has been seen from the enemy. Iraqi vessels have only launched rockets near the Khur 'Abdollah River bank.

In the afternoon, as well, a counterattack takes place for an hour and a half on the axis of the al-Behar road, which ends in heavy of artillery fire, the continuous activities of the Air Force helicopters, and the resistance of the combatants, without any result.

Complete Stabilization of All Defense Lines From the Banks of the Arvand River to the Khur 'Abdollah River

The Sixth Night and Day of the Operation

After the frequent attack of our forces and the killing of many of the enemy personnel, the destruction and disintegration of the skillful and active units of the Iraqi army, and the successful repelling of the counterattacks on all axes, our forces have now reached the predetermined objectives, all units having concentrated the major part of their activities on attending to, reinforcing, and repairing the embankments and on engineering operations to stabilize and reinforce the defense lines as much as possible.

As darkness falls, the engineering activities on all axes begin. Ahead of the loaders and bulldozers, our infantry forces execute light and semiheavy fire to safeguard the equipment. A large volume of artillery fire is also concentrated on the front lines of the enemy. The enemy forces, because of their particular psychological condition, not only fail to respond to the activities of the engineering equipment, but also out of fear of the continuation of our operation, with initial fire, they first move their tanks farther back and then move their infantry out of the reach of the combatants of Islam. Hence, until the light of morning, the engineering groups continue their activities without significant casualties and create suitable embankments. In addition, the demolition forces, taking advantage of the enemy retreat, split the asphalt road in four spots on the Om ol-Qasr road.

On 11/26 [15 February], the enemy engages in attacks on the coastal axis and inside the date palm grove and later in the afternoon on the axis of the Basra road, none of which is successful. East of the salt plant and in the area between the two al-Behar and Basra roads, the enemy has suffered heavy casualties and initially, as a result of the unexpected confrontation by our forces, 10 tanks have been destroyed and are on fire, and the battle formation of the enemy disintegrates.

After half an hour of direct shell fire exchange and one hour after the start of the counterattack, leaving 15 destroyed tanks and personnel carriers as well as three undamaged T-72 tanks behind, the enemy evacuates its many dead and wounded and retreats. (Footnote 10) (These tanks are transferred to our area the next night.)

On the axis of the Om ol-Qasr road, as well, in one instance the enemy attack on our line by 10 PMP personnel carriers as soon as the first PMP is destroyed by missile attack, stops the advance of the rest and subsequently is forced to retreat.

The Seventh Night

Diversionary Tactics on the Axis of Om ol-Qasr Road

The plan of an attack, with more potential and stronger organization, is made to demolish and explode the bridge installed on the canal ending at the northwest wall of the salt plant and secure the area around the canal, if possible while destroying another part of the enemy forces.

On the left of the operation, three regiments prepare for maneuvers to advance along the Om ol-Qasr road and, to its right, a regiment to cross the western flood dam of the salt plant (two km to the right of the asphalt road). At 2200, while the regiments have started to move and are walking toward the release point (our embankment), the demolition personnel disarm the mines planted in front of our embankment and open the way for the passage of the regiments.

At 2310, the "Salman" Regiment crosses our defense line (the "Habib" Regiment line about 14 km from the city of Faw). Two companies alongside the road and one company at the right side of it advance, close to one another. While keeping order, passing through the destroyed enemy personnel carriers and tanks, the column approaches the enemy line 5 km from the bridge.

With the firing of the first shot by the enemy from the buildings on the right and the obstacles along the road, the companies start their attack with heavy fire. Simultaneously, at 2410, our artillery is ordered to discharge heavy fire on the enemy position. In a short period of time, the combatants fully break the enemy defense line and, after some advancement, like the previous night, confront a column of enemy personnel carriers and tanks. The RPG shooters fire missiles, one after another, like heavy artillery, and the infantry forces, with the support of our machine guns along with the fire of the light weapons, advance every moment. Seeing our decisive and heavy attack, the enemy begins to flee, and a number also hide among the PMPs and inside the surrounding buildings to put up resistance against the combatants.

In the meantime, one of the active elements of the army chases the fleeing enemy into a building. In the course of vehement hand-to-hand combat with enemy personnel, after killing a number of them, he is shot and attains his ultimate wish, martyrdom. (Brother Hasan Qomi, the competent commander of the Islamic army, who had engaged in battle with death continuously since the Kurdistan riot and in the course of the imposed war.) From this movement, the forces engage in the more rapid inch-by-inch purging of the road and the surrounding buildings, and the battle becomes more intense every moment.

At 0130, with the escape and death of a large number of enemy personnel and the destruction of their armored vehicles, the Salman Regiment penetrates 2-km deep, and the Malek Regiment enters the action upon the order of Brother Dastvaneh, who is present near the area.

The fighting continues along the Om ol-Qasr road with the increasing power and capability of the Islamic forces. The regiment fighting on the right axis, after destroying several tanks and a small number of enemy personnel, succeeds in crossing the canal ending at the north wall of the salt plant and takes its position at the bridge.

Here, our forces more cheerfully report via radio the news of their arrival at the bridge, 28 km from the Om ol-Qasr road, and surrounding the enemy forces. The Malek Regiment at this moment has reached 3 km from the bridge, and in these 3 km a mass of enemy infantry and armored forces are surrounded. Hence, many of the enemy infantry personnel take shelter in the surrounding buildings, and the enemy tanks, moving slowly backward, create a dam of fire in the face of the pounding attacks of the Malek Regiment forces and continue to do so for some time. With their machine gun fire and direct shelling, they are trying to keep out of range of the skilled RPG shooters of the regiment.

Under these circumstances, a great deal of fear is created in the enemy, because the combatants have now advanced to 20 km from the city of Faw along the road to Om ol-Qasr. The enemy anxiously moves the 10th Armored Division from Om ol-Qasr toward the bridge. With the expansion of the enemy forces 3 or 4 km from the bridge and their use of the darkness of the night and the artificial fortifications at the edge of the Om ol-Qasr road, the Ansar Regiment hurries to the aid of other forces. At 1630 to 1700, the battle reaches a crucial point. Our forces, with the help of the fresh combatants of the Ansar Regiment, succeed in destroying a part of the enemy forces fighting at the side of the road, reach 1.5 km from the bridge, and come as close as possible to the forces waiting on the other side and being fired at from two sides.

The sun is about to cast its rays on the scene of the operation. The outcome of the action depends on seconds and the short distance of a few hundred meters. The commander of the operations finds it expedient to order the engineering groups to build an embankment from this point to the end of the western wall of the salt plant. To gain victory, the combatants of Islam engage in this important business so that upon the morning's light, using the necessary fortifications and positions, they can engage in advancement or defense against the enemy counterattacks. Hence, the Muslim Regiment enters the scene of operation to support the combatants who are fighting the armored and infantry forces of the enemy near the bridge.

Fighting continues until morning and sometime after, and while our forces succeed in totally destroying the armored enemy forces and killing almost all the enemy infantry, at every corner of the scene of operation, the vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and support fire of the artillery prepare for the execution of a counterattack toward the bridge and the canal.

A large portion of the forces are positioned behind the embankment, and one company of the Muslim Regiment also moves toward the bridge to join the al-Mahdi combatants. At this moment, the enemy counterattack begins on the Om ol-Qasr road, and the pressure in the area surrounding the bridge increases several fold. The al-Mahdi combatants, who have so far displayed unmatched heroism and self-sacrifice, now helping the Muslim ebn 'Aqil Company, continue fighting face-to-face with the enemy. The unequal battle lasts for an hour on the other side of the bridge, and our forces, whose radio contact to the rear has been cut off, with much difficulty and small numbers, continue to block the enemy to the south of the canal. During this time, our embankment and defense positions in the south of the bridge are suitably reinforced, and the engineering demolition and supply personnel perform their important and essential assignments in a satisfactory manner.

Finally, after totally repelling the enemy counterattack, the self-sacrificing al-Mahdi forces along with the Muslim ebn 'Aqil Regiment, 1 and ½ km to this side of the bridge, are in strong positions to continue fighting. Hence, the positions of the combatants along the Faw-Om ol-Qasr road, 16 km west of Faw, are stabilized.

Among the brilliant results of the operations on this night are:

The destruction of 80 tanks and armored personnel carriers.

Taking as spoils 20 tanks, including a number of T-72 advanced tanks.

The destruction of a significant number of Iraqi mercenaries, including blows to the mechanized 20th Brigade of the 5th Division, units of the 66th Brigade of the special forces of the 95th Infantry Division, and one regiment of the 10th Armored Division.

A 5-km advancement along the Om ol-Qasr road and the western wall of the salt factory.

The Seventh Day

Reorganization of the Enemy and Its Annihilation

On this day, due to frequent defeats and the disintegration of its military organization during the previous days, the enemy, with a great deal of fear, divides the operational zone into three axes and assigns each to its most barbaric high-ranking commanders and, under the direct supervision of Saddam Husayn, prepares for its strongest counterattack.

Around 1413, the very heavy initial artillery fire and the enemy movement east of the salt plant indicate the onset of the counterattack.

On our front line, in the area between the al-Behar and Basra roads, with heavy antitank weapons, tanks, personnel carriers, 106-caliber guns, and a large number of RPG-7 weapons, the regiments prepare for confrontation.

Since last night, a new multilayered embankment dozens of meters in front of our defense positions has been erected and with the perseverance of the regiment command and the unceasing efforts of the engineering groups of the [Ministry of Construction] Jihad and the Guard Corps, the trench-building operations and creation of necessary fortifications are carried out rapidly.

Under these conditions, the heavy enemy artillery fire lasts for an hour and a half, and our forces remain inside the trenches upon the emphatic instructions of their officers. The initial fire of the enemy is so heavy that a large portion of the sky in the area is covered with dust. But only two persons are injured. The firing continues incessantly until 1430, and the enemy infantry and armored forces simultaneously approach our embankment on a large scale.

Our forces, fully composed and without any response, are watching every move from inside the trenches. At the moment the enemy comes within 300 to 400 meters of the embankment, suddenly the shelling stops and our forces realize the imminence of the attack. But our forces continue to remain silent and in complete control; the Basijis only watch the enemy movements. Hence, as soon as the initial fire ceases, the infantry personnel under the shelter of advanced T-72 tanks and in front of a personnel carrier approach the line. The antitank missile personnel are positioned, the 106-caliber guns positioned on special platforms are loaded, the RPGs are loaded, and all the combatants continue to be silent, eyes wide open. The enemy thinks that as a result of heavy fire, the Islamic forces have lost their capability and therefore comes closer. At 150 meters from the embankment, suddenly two of the enemy personnel carriers rev their engines and speed up toward the embankment. All sorts of antitank and antipersonnel weapons begin to fire from our line. As soon as the personnel carriers reach this side of the embankment, two RPG shooters aim and shoot, intending to destroy them. At this time, the voice of the commander can be heard: "Don't shoot. Don't shoot. Wait. These personnel carriers are ours. Don't shoot. Leave them unharmed." At this time, the people inside the personnel carriers, who are terrified by the mass of the Islamic forces behind the embankment, immediately drop their weapons and surrender, and a number of them who intend to resist are killed before they can put their fingers on the trigger.

In the first phase of the battle, five enemy vehicles are destroyed and smoke and fire rises up. The enemy infantry personnel, without any shelter and in a scattered manner, continue to struggle on the flat land under the fire of the light weapons of the Basijis. A severe battle continues between the two sides. The front line forces of the enemy have all fallen to the ground. After a while, the enemy commanders, who are watching the humiliating defeat of their personnel, are obliged to bring their special forces to the scene of the operations and, in order to occupy the embankment of the combatants of Islam, request of the commander of the Basra Region Regiment to fire and also send forces and command cadre to replace those killed. The enemy forces, consisting of two mechanized infantry divisions, have lost their courage to advance toward the combatants of Islam and have stopped. Much of the armored equipment of the enemy has come so close to the embankment that they are in range of the RPG missiles of the Islamic army and are destroyed one after another.

No more than one or two hours have passed from the start of the counterattack when along the length of the embankment in front of our forces a large number of tanks and personnel carriers are burning and some are disabled or abandoned. The enemy's organization has seriously disintegrated and it seems that they have given up the idea of gaining access to the embankment. Most of them are running around in confusion to find a safe place to hide from our heavy fire. The killing causes the Basiji forces to continue to shout: "God is great."

After witnessing the instability of the enemy, our forces do not wait for the remainder of the personnel to escape and, upon the order of the commander, all exit the trenches and chase the enemy on the other side of the embankment. The brothers chase the enemy group by group and pass among the dead and the wounded, the tanks and personnel carriers looking for fleeing enemy personnel.

The commander, who is a fearless and experienced official of the regiment, places an armed Basiji on a motorcycle who, on the other side of the embankment in front of the forces, moves after the fleeing enemy personnel.

In the last moment, after killing a large number of the enemy, taking 40 prisoners, destroying 30 to 40 tanks and personnel carriers, and taking eight tanks (mostly T-72) as spoils, our forces stop their advancement and are once again positioned behind the embankment.

At this moment, two fighter planes of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic appear in the sky and in a few minutes engage in bombing the rear of the enemy forces. This bombing is aimed so precisely at a part of the enemy front line and over the heads of the fleeing counterattack forces that the Basiji combat forces can see very well the explosion of the enemy tanks and weapons from a distance of 2 km.

Finally, the Islamic forces, after four hours of battle, repel the strongest enemy counterattack with unmatched success.

The Eighth Night and Day

Determination and Declaration of Readiness of the Forces To Continue the Operation

Regarding the decision of the commander, despite the pressures and rigors of the attacks and defense of several days, some of our forces located on about 20 km of the embankment, who are now supposed to be replaced with new combatants (Pilgrims to Karbala 2) for reorganization, insist on remaining and continuing to participate in the operations. The self-sacrifice and generosity of these brothers causes embarrassment, which is evident on the faces of all the operational officials and has weakened their determination and necessary judgment.

On the axis of the date palm grove, one of the regimental commanders, who was shot in the neck on the first day, after superficial bandaging has continued his activities to the present. He has so far had to direct the forces under his command by turning his whole body when he speaks; he is incapable of turning his neck independently. But, so far, ignoring the fact that the wound is becoming infected, he has not left the embankment for a moment and even has not informed his commander in the past few days. He knew that if in the first five days his higher commander was informed about his neck injury, he, as one of the best regimental commanders, would certainly be evacuated in order to protect the cadre. For this reason, in the course of the past days, he had only carried out the necessary coordination over the radio and by sending messengers, and when the division commander has been on the front line, he has hidden under one pretext or another. In any case, since the commander learned of the matter, he has insisted on his leaving the area for treatment and hospitalization. But, up to this moment, he has not succeeded. He has been amazed by so much generosity and self-sacrifice; he had had no idea. The officer insists on his promise to the commander before the operations. He said: If there are a thousand problems, we must take our line. All of these operations depend on us. If we retreat one step, the rest will begin to shake. (Footnote 11) (This was referred to on p. 18.)

Finally, after much insistence, with little life left in him and at any moment vulnerable to falling to the ground, he is evacuated to the rear and operated on.

Of the total of a reserve regiment known as Fazlollah, which is made up completely of pilgrims to Karbala, even its regimental commander has been sent recently (since two or three years ago for personal reasons, he has been serving the war and the revolution in a different garb), only 15 remain on the line; the rest, as a result of chemical bombing, have been transferred to the rear during the enemy counterattacks. From the fifth day of the operation to this time, this regiment has displayed unparalleled resistance not expected by the division commander, but none of the remaining brothers of the regiment consent to be evacuated.

For the sake of the family of the regimental commander (with one martyr) and also due to the need to reorganize all the regiments, the division commander insists on his decision. Finally, after much pleading by the regimental commander, he gives in to his request. For this reason, this regiment, with the same number, continues to fight the enemy counterattacks for some days. The division commander, on various occasions and at every opportunity, always mentions their heroism to the other combat brothers, speaking about the loyalty to the Imam of the Basiji combatants and the martyr-nurturing people.

The commander of one of the Islamic armies, who has played a significant role in the destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guards on the Basra axis, so far believing that "with minimal forces, maximal casualties must be inflicted on the enemy," has been under the constant pressure of the army cadre and has resisted the frequent requests to continue the operations and carry out costly diversionary tactics.

At this moment (early on the eighth night), the axis commander suggests that: "We enter all regiments and in an operation go to the gravel road (ending with the Basra road, in the middle of the eastern wall of the salt plant), build an embankment, and establish a line of defense."

The commander defers this suggestion. The requests of the regiment cadre turn into protests and pressure continues in the form of criticism of the commander. On the other hand, the division commander, for various reasons of expediency, continues to defer this suggestion and dismisses or retains each person as he sees fit.

Another official of the axis, realizing that his efforts to obtain permission to participate in the operations and enter in the first line are useless, finally pleads: "Brother Hoseyn, I have a request. If you will permit us to take part in the operation tonight, we will be very grateful."

And the commander, while enumerating the requirements, denies him and assigns him to the organizations of the regiments.

Our Final Measures and the Enemy Movements

Under the situation of the enemy continuing to reinforce its defense lines at the two axes of Om ol-Qasr and the strategic road by building strongholds and increasing forces, the Islamic forces in several mop-up operations one after another engage in annihilating the enemy.

On the eighth and ninth nights, the combatants, with a small number, attack the enemy formation on the three-way intersection of the Basra road axis and also around the bridge to the northwest of the salt plant and, destroying some of the enemy forces, remove the chances of the enemy to rest and prepare for a counterattack. During these nights, until daylight, the enemy personnel fire shots around them uselessly, and shell the vast land in the area with blind artillery fire.

The enemy's fear of the advancement of the Islamic forces is so great that it frequently brings new units to the region and reinforces its armored units. During the night, the tanks circle around themselves with their lights on and machine guns shoot towards the positions of our forces. The penetration of the Basijis at a depth of 3 or 4 km into the enemy and their surprise operation have created such fear among the enemy that they cannot sleep.

Nevertheless, after pressure by the Ba'th army command, in the following days as well, the enemy launches several counterattacks. But these actions are much weaker than in the past, and every time, given the dominant power of our forces in the whole region, they end in defeat. (Footnote 12) (In map No. 4, included in the book, full reference is made to the direction of the counterattacks and the combat potential of the enemy units from the first day of the operation to the following weeks.) In the evening, our scouts direct such heavy and concentrated artillery fire in the most sensitive moments on the buildup of columns that the ground of the region turns into a hell of fire and bullets. Our deadly field of fire stops or slows down any advancement towards the Islamic forces.

After the last defeat of the enemy in its desperate effort, the resulting fear among the counterattack units strips them of the ability to engage in similar actions for a week to come. Apparently, at this time, the enemy realizes the superior position of the Islamic forces and engages in stabilizing its positions.

With the start of the serious defense activities of Iraq, which contrary to the past are handled in a calculated way, in fact, the end of Iraq's chance to defeat our lines and penetrate into the Faw region arrives.

Our forces, too, from this time on continue with engineering activities and reinforce their defense line with extensive, strong multilayered embankments. Using the water of the Arvand and Khur 'Abdollah Rivers, they create small, artificial lakes in front of the enemy to reduce the likelihood of penetration into our positions. At this time, in a short period of time after the end of the operation, the engineering forces of the [Ministry of Construction] Jihad and the guards successfully install a stable bridge across the roaring Arvand River to facilitate traffic and support for our units in the Faw region, and, despite the numerous air attacks by the enemy to destroy the bridge, traffic continues on it.

Not only would the engineering exploits carried out after the operation not been possible or imaginable for the foreign naval experts during the past puppet regime, but also the existing military formulas and culture essentially do not and will not have the capacity to comprehend such significant innovative and creative ideas. The interpretation and description of these activities and the display of the subjects and other examples of this kind will reveal, after the end of the victorious war of Islamic Iran against the Ba'th government of Iraq, the astonishing secret of the domination of faith over expertise and the level of familiarity and the capability of our forces in these areas.

The End

Explanation of Selected Terms Used in the Book

1) Suleh: a prefabricated bunker, the initial skeleton of which is made of steel posts and is much larger than a regular bunker.

2) Chulan: dense vegetation, which grows at great height in marshes and wet areas and prevents the movement of boats.

3) Khaneh-ye Aludeh [contaminated house]: the name for places and houses that have not been cleared of the enemy.

4) Donbal Poshtiban [follow-up support]: a combat group or unit that has been given a special assignment and enters the action following the forces carrying out the initial phase of an operation.

5) Fin [flippers]: special scuba diving shoes that resemble the feet of ducks and are used to facilitate movement in water.

6) Molazem: officer.

7) Heliborne: movement and transport of combat forces and military equipment by helicopter, which is used for maximum surprise in attacking or supporting defenders against the enemy.

8) Ezhdarbangal: a pipe 1-3 meters long, which contains explosives and is activated by the existing detonator at the end of it.

9) Qararqah [command post]: the organization of a leadership cadre to administer and guide one military unit. What is meant by command post, which is referred to throughout the book, is mostly positions that at various levels of enemy command and personnel after the attack of the combatants is used as shelter to continue resistance.

10) Goluleh-ye Resom [tracer bullet]: special bullet that, because of the method of manufacturing and material, after being shot at night can be seen as a molten and bright object.

11) Gera [Azimuth]: directions on the basis of the extension of a line from one point to another used to distinguish the target (by use of geographical specifications or a compass). In the operation, this point, as an index, is the final range of what has been released or the launched object.

12) Sarpolqini [bridgehead] (in land-water areas): a specific area on the enemy bank that after being occupied and secured makes the continuous landing of forces and equipment possible and will provide sufficient space for future advancement or maneuvers.

Name of Book: *Battle of Faw (Valfajr 8 Operation)*
Political Deputy of the General Command Post, War Studies and Research
Publisher: Guard Corps of the Islamic Revolution
Distributed by the Reja' Cultural Publication Center
1,000 copies
Third Printing: Spring 1367 [1988]
Lithography: Color
Printer: Pezhman

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

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